

Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
Moin Ahmad Nizami

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Title Pages

Moin Ahmad Nizami

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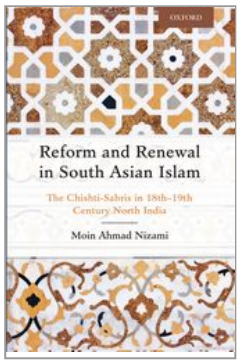
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Dedication

Moin Ahmad Nizami

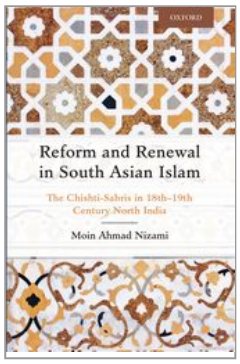
(p.v)

To the loving memory of my grandfather,
Professor K. A. Nizami

تو کہاں ہے اے کلیم ذروہء سیناےء علم
تھی تیری موج نفس بادِ نشاط افزاےء علم
(اقبال) **(p.vi)**

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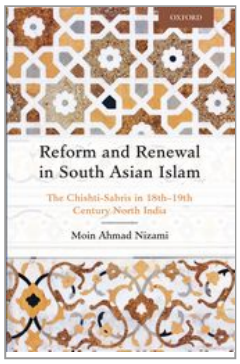
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(p.xi) Foreword

Bruce B. Lawrence

The status of Sūfīs within Islam has been debated by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, but all analysts have to consider three axes foundational to Sufism: thought, action, and organization. Sūfī thought is speculative, blurring the line between mystical and juridical notions of Islamic identity. Sūfī action is ascetical, denying worldliness and reflex habits but also exulting in meditation, poetry, and music. Sūfī organization, on the other hand, requires a degree of worldliness: money and patronage, buildings and tomb sites, pilgrimage and festivals.

The brotherhood or *tarīqa* brings together and blends thought, action, and organization through networks. Each brotherhood focuses on a genealogy of spiritual luminaries, also known as saints (*auliyā*). Their pedigree extends back to the seventh century and the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Yet each brotherhood has its own emphasis, and also its own realm or *wilāyat*, the geographic domain within which it claims spiritual ascendancy, attracting Muslims but also non-Muslims to its tombs, especially during times of celebration (*'urs*) of deceased masters (*mashā'ikh*).

(p.xii) The Indian subcontinent has the largest number of Muslims in the world: add up the populations of Pakistan and Bangladesh, predominantly Muslim, and add to their total the large Muslim minority of India, and the total exceeds 500 million, or roughly one-third of all Muslims in 2015. While it is impossible to reckon how many are Sūfī or have Sūfī connections, the impact of Sufism through the brotherhoods permeates the history of each nation-state, but especially Pakistan and India.[1] Throughout the pre-modern and early modern periods, the ascendant order in South Asia has been the Chishtiyya. It originated beyond India, in Central Asia, but it came to dominate in the subcontinent even before the rise of the Mughal dynasty, ca. 1500. Explains historian Nile Green:

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‘Whereas in 1100, the Chishtī brotherhood consisted of little more than a gathering of men in the mountain village of Chisht (a town in modern Afghanistan), through its reproduction among generations of migrant deputies, by the mid-1400s it could count outposts in the cities and small towns of almost every corner of the Indian subcontinent.’[2]

The major exemplar who catapulted the Chishtīs to regional, then trans-regional, fame was a reclusive master named Farīd-ud-dīn Ganj-i Shakar (d. 1265), buried in Pakpattan in present-day Pakistan. From Farīd-ud-dīn evolved two suborders—the Nizāmiyya and the Sābriyya. In North India, the former attracts the greatest attention to its exemplars and shrines as also its annual celebrations of bygone heroes. It is two disciples of Farīd-ud-dīn Ganj-i Shakar who provide the cleavage that **(p.xiii)** marks the Chishtiyya till today: Nizām-ud-din Auliyā’ (d. 1325), who died in Delhi (along with his successor, Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh-i Dihlī, d. 1356), while ‘Ali ibn Ahmad Sābir (d. 1291), the eponymous founder of the Chishtī-Sābrīs, died and was buried in Kalyar, a remote town in upper Uttar Pradesh.

Despite their seeming marginality, however, the Sābrī suborder influenced regional developments of Chishtī loyalty as also Muslim reform and renewal, the topic of the current book. During the Mughal period (1526–1857) the Sābrī Chishtīs vaulted from obscure origins to prominence. They achieved renown through a series of masters, chief among them ‘Abd al-Haqq Rudawlavi (d. 1434) and ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (d. 1537). Their explosive power frequently was attained by trans-historical Uwaysi initiations, which were also modulated by contact with Indian yoga techniques and Sūfī metaphysical doctrine.[3]

Most accounts of the Chishtī-Sābrīs skip from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, and focus on the abortive 1857 revolt against the British and its aftermaths. Among the dissident rebels who rejected British authority was Hājī Imdādullāh (d. 1899). A Sābrī Chishtī master, Imdādullāh looms as a giant amid all the reform movements of the late nineteenth century that adapted and transformed their Islamic renewal into a pan-Indian force. This reformist move entailed a re-evaluation and critique of parts of the Chishtī legacy, especially in matters of practice such as tomb pilgrimage and listening to music, but it entailed much more. It showed the resilience of one region—Awadh, in Northern India, to the western part of Uttar Pradesh—in advocating a hybrid form of Sufism that combined the roles of jurist and mystic master, also known as the ‘*ālim*/Sūfī nexus. And it did so not around tombs per se but around *qasbah*s, or local townships, in the adjacent region of the Upper Doab that generated a new movement with emphasis on scriptural education for non-elites as well as for elites.

Moin Nizami has crafted a book that retells the story of Sufism in general and the Sābrī Chishtīs in particular, with new accents and fresh insights. Of special importance is his inquiry into one structure, the *qasbah*s, in one location, the

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Upper Doab, in order to demonstrate how their **(p.xiv)** residents generated an indigenous vision of Sūfī leadership. It emerged in part due to colonial pressures and also reliance on colonial structures of communication, but its centrepiece was a distinctly Muslim synergy: the '*ālim*/Sūfī', or what some have called 'Shari'ah-minded Sufis'.[4] Such reformist Sūfīs in nineteenth-century North India then became the catalyst for a sustainable Indo-Muslim identity across time and place.

As Scott Kugle has brilliantly shown elsewhere, the colonial context was the backdrop but not the defining element in the élan of Hājī Imdādullāh. The central plea of this Sābrī Chishtī master to his followers was an urgent quest: to 'search for God's presence within their own hearts',[5] or, in Nile Green's words, Imdādullāh prodded his co-religionists to avoid political/military violence and instead 'to consolidate their control of the private sphere of their own bodies, to pursue the inner jihad against one's own flesh and spirit'.[6]

It may also be that Hājī Imdādullāh's legacy was shaped as much by his protracted stay in Mecca as by his early tutelage in North India. The Indian historian Seema Alavi notes that Imdādullāh experienced Mecca as 'the cradle of Muslim cosmopolitanism'.[7] He imbibed the transnational inclusive spirit of the multilingual world of the British and Ottoman empires. While the British and Ottoman imperial strategies were competitive, Muslim exemplars, such as Hājī Imdādullāh, could do **(p.xv)** more than suffer the manipulations of power; they often initiated and used them to their own benefit. For Hājī Imdādullāh, the importance of multilingual practices became so foundational that the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī 'remained his source of inspiration throughout his life'.[8] In Persian epistles, but also in Urdu poems, he inflected the entire Indo-Persianate imaginary into an expanded cultural grid that could and did contend with English as the register of 'modern' Muslim identity.

If it is impossible to overstate the importance of Imdādullāh, it is equally important to note that the current book does much more than form a backdrop for this extraordinary '*ālim*–Sūfī nexus. It confirms how the Sābrī-Chishtī suborder was inherently pluralist, flexible, and pragmatic. Its spread in Upper Doab *qasbah*s was in part due to the ingenuity of eighteenth-century masters who linked to non-Chishtī brotherhoods, especially the Mujaddidī Naqshbandī, but also to Muslim scholarly networks across North India. They may have been goaded by colonial accents on English, Protestant Christianity, and public displays of neutrality in matters of religion; but they also understood the resonance between reform in the letter and renewal in the spirit. Each required the other. The Sūfī–'*ālim* or '*ālim*–Sūfī was not a strange schizophrenic personality but an evolving hybrid, one adapting to colonial norms without accepting its values—either linguistic, cultural, or religious. To the extent that Hājī Imdādullāh embraced a moderate reform of Sūfī practices, while also stressing *ijtihād* (creative rethinking of Islamic norms) within the Muslim

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community, he was culminating a tradition with deep roots in North India; it is not a novelty of British origin or foreign inspiration.

The book is unusual, and productive, for the wide register of Sūfī activity that it highlights, explores, and attempts to explain. The Chishtī-Sābrī suborder in medieval Awadh is not only pluralist but also mobile: its leaders expand their activity to the Upper Doab region at the same time that they connect with the reformist Naqshbandī tradition of Delhi. Especially when they develop new networks within the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab, they become, in effect, incubators of Sūfī reform. Far from being hostile to the knowledge class and its most distinctive public members, the '*ulamā*, they propose to reinvigorate Islam through scholarship as well as remembrance, in the *madrasah* as well as in the *khānqāh*. It is simplistic, and inaccurate, to consider reformist Muslims and Sūfī masters **(p.xvi)** as tireless opponents of each other, expounding opposite views of 'true' Islam. The positive response of Sūfīs to new directions for reinterpreting and emboldening the public profile of Muslim leaders is evident in the Sābrī case. No one exemplifies this shift better than Hājī Imdādullāh, and no one has more patiently and productively examined the legacy of Hājī Imdādullāh as a key figure of the Sābrī suborder in nineteenth-century North India than Moin Nizami. His study demonstrates how, where, and why Hājī Imdādullāh attempted to bring '*ulamā* and Sūfī traditions closer to one another, introducing a moderate reform of Sūfī practices while stressing *ijtihād* within the Muslim community.

Perhaps the most enduring benefit of this book is its reformulation of the notion of ascent-decline or progress-backwardness. In meticulous detail and with cogent analysis Nizami showcases the continuing vitality and creativity of the Sūfī world in nineteenth-century North India, thereby challenging any claims that Sufism was in a state of decline and unable to respond to the colonial pressures and challenges of the century. Hājī Imdādullāh stands forth as the key figure of the anti-colonial Sābrī order, demonstrating the persistent resilience and high-mindedness of Sūfī reformers, not least through his creative use of long distance networks that he either inherited or expanded or both.

Too many historians, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, speak of Sufism as backwardness and 'false Islam', contrasting it with reform or revival embodied by literalists—whether Wahhabi, Salafi, or Ikhwani—as 'true' Islam. The American historian Marshall Hodgson had already signalled that the so-called rise of the West was more like a gradual occurrence, one he termed the Great Western Transmutation, and that in retrospect all Muslims, including Sūfīs, became redefined as though they belonged to a pre-modern world, at once stagnant and regressive, when in fact, there was enormous variation and also vitality within Muslim communities, nowhere more so than in North India.[9] By demonstrating the resilient creativity of Sūfī networks and leaders in nineteenth-century Awadh/Upper Doab, Moin Nizami proves the opposite: Sufism, despite

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what its critics, Muslim and non-Muslim, argue, was not in a state of decline. Its **(p.xvii)** leaders, and their followers, did respond to colonial pressures and challenges but through resort to a new register of loyalty and practice that esteemed the past while also preparing for a turbulent yet still hopeful future. Few scholars would have ventured into this period with such zest and finesse, but Moin Nizami has provided a benchmark, as also a goad, for further studies of Muslim creativity in forging religious rather than political responses to the challenge of Western colonial—now global post-colonial—notions of order, humanity, and the collective good.

Bruce B. Lawrence

Professor Emeritus

Duke University **(p.xviii)**

Notes:

([1]) For a brilliant, fresh and compelling analysis of how Sufism is not eccentric to, but foundational for, Muslim identity, see Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). Ahmed, a Pakistani national raised in Malaysia and educated in Cairo and Princeton, taught at Harvard for over a decade but died at age 48 before his magnum opus could be published (September 2015). In *What is Islam?* Ahmed demonstrates that Islam is a convergent worldview harnessing both diversity and contradiction in the Muslim quest for meaning and truth. Though Sūfis pursued a different register of truth than legists, argues Ahmed, both groups were aware of and constantly engaged by each other, so much so that 'Sufism—the theory and practice of holistic, experiential knowing of Divine Truth—was, for over a millennium, a foundational, commonplace and institutionalized conceptual and social phenomenon in societies of Muslims' (especially but not solely in what he terms the Balkans-to-Bengal complex). (*What is Islam?* pp. 20, 32, and *passim*)

([2]) Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 90.

([3]) See the still unsurpassed study of Simon Digby, 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi', *Medieval India: A Miscellany* 3 (1975):1–66.

([4]) The term 'Shari'ah-minded Sufi' goes back to Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 219–22. While Hodgson traces Shari'a-minded Sufism to the early twelfth century, Scott Kugle has shown how such fully observant Sūfī masters, or juridical Sūfī, also existed as early as the fifteenth or sixteenth century in North Africa, exemplified by Ahmad Zarruq, a reformist Sūfī of Fez, Morocco. See Scott Kugle, *Rebel between Spirit and Law:*

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Ahmad Zarruq, Sainthood, and Authority in Islam (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006), especially 36–40 and 223–4. For an examination of how Sābrī-Chishtī masters have shaped contemporary Pakistani politics, see the forthright and creative analysis of Robert Rozehnal, *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2009).

([5]) Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality & Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill, 2007), p. 262.

([6]) Green, *Sufism: A Global History*, p. 194.

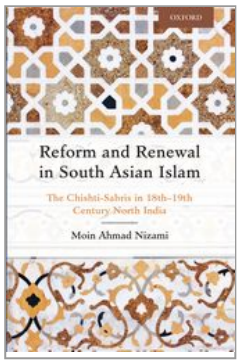
([7]) Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), p. 225.

([8]) Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism*, p. 223.

([9]) Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, vol. 3: 176–222, but especially 196–205. For Hodgson's choice of transmutation rather than transformation, see Bruce B. Lawrence, 'Transformation', in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (ed.), Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 342–6.

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Moin Ahmad Nizami

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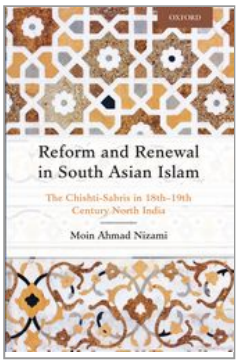
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(p.xxi) Note on Transliteration

Moin Ahmad Nizami

For consistency, the following rules of transliteration of Urdu, Arabic, and Persian words have been used in the book.

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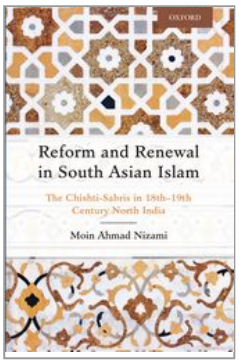
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Where ال is used to connect words, I have preferred using the spelling which closely represents the way it is spoken in South Asia. For instance, ‘Abd-al-Rahmān is written as ‘Abdul Rahmān, *Dār-al-‘ulūm* is written *Dārul ‘ulūm*, and so forth. All words which are connected by ِ are written with a hyphenated -i-. Whenever possible, I have made plurals of Urdu/Persian words by adding ‘s’. For instance, the plural of *shaikh* is written as *shaikh*s (instead of *mashāi’kh*). A full reference is provided in the footnote when a work is cited the first time in each chapter.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
Moin Ahmad Nizami

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Introduction

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Abstract and Keywords

The Introduction gives an account of the thematic scope and method of the work, and the rationale for the arrangement of its different elements. It discusses the nature and value of the sources on which the work is based, and its departures from, and contributions to, the existing scholarly literature. It notices the different forms of Muslim religious leadership (eg. ulama and Sufi) that were available in colonial north India and how each tradition created new avenues for change under the colonial presence. The Sufi reactions to colonial pressures and revivalist upsurge in India are compared with some major studies looking at similar responses outside of South Asia.

Keywords: Sufi, ulama, Muslim revivalism, colonialism, Shah Waliullah, Deoband, Chishti-Sabri, Naqshbandi

Islamic mysticism has enjoyed great mass appeal since the formation of spiritual brotherhoods, variously called Sūfī orders, *silsilah*s, or *tarīqah*s, in the twelfth century. In many Muslim communities Sūfī orders rooted themselves in society by identifying closely with its needs and acquired considerable social and intellectual importance. In South Asia they were especially popular and made a decisive impact on the religious ethos of the region. Of the many Sūfī orders that have operated in the subcontinent, the Chishtī order is the oldest and with the most numerous adherents. Founded in Chisht (a village near Herat in modern Afghanistan) in the tenth century, it arrived in the subcontinent in the closing years of the twelfth century.[1] Under some of their early charismatic *shaikh*s **(p. 2)** (Sūfī masters) such as Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī (d. 1235), Farīd-ud-dīn Mas'ūd (d. 1265) and Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' (d. 1325), the Chishtīs were quick to

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adapt to the new socio-cultural milieu. Within a short span of time, Chishtī *khānqāh*s (Sūfī lodges/hospices) sprang up in Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, and Bengal, testifying to the popular recognition received by its *shaikh*s from different sections of society. At times, as in Deccan or Gujarat, this expansion even predated the extension of Delhi's political authority. Over the succeeding centuries, the order's popularity was maintained through its two main branches, the Chishtī-Nizāmī and the Chishtī-Sābrī, named after their respective eponymous founders Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' and 'Alā-ud-dīn 'Alī Sābir (d. *ca.* 1291). The two lineages were not divided by ideology but were formed by different initiatic links.

The history of the early period of the Chishtī-Sābrī order is not known with any certainty: historians working on the early period have been confronted with a paucity of authentic source material. The order's leaders remained relatively less visible till the sixteenth century, and later hagiographers constructed miraculous stories around them.[2] Reliable accounts come into existence from the sixteenth century onwards. Aside from the north Indian towns of Gangoh, Thanesar, and Kalyer, the order's strongholds were the twin cities of Rudauli and Allahabad in Awadh. Its early traditions were also moulded by the religious climate of medieval Awadh—a region known for cross-cultural interaction and a spirit of religious accommodativeness.[3] In the eighteenth century, the order's centre of activity shifted to the Upper Doab. The townships (*qasbah*s) in the districts of Muradabad, Muzaffarnagar, and Saharanpur (in modern **(p.3)** Uttar Pradesh) came to be dotted with Chishtī-Sābrī *khānqāh*s and their familial and scholarly networks dominated the region.

With the steady decline in Mughal political power from about the second quarter of the eighteenth century, there was a parallel increase in the number and scope of British colonial interventions. This period saw the growing importance of the Upper Doab as a heartland of Indo-Muslim culture, where influential religious scholars coalesced into a well-knit community to safeguard the traditional educational and moral set-up of the Indo-Muslim society. The small *qasbah*s, many of which had hitherto been insignificant, rose to prominence and the resident Muslim scholars entered into an active intellectual exchange with the outside world. This exchange was local and regional, but supported by improvements in transport, became also transnational. There was an increasing interaction within the Islamic world as Mecca and Medina, besides being the symbolic heartland of Islam, became centres of significant intellectual interchange.[4] The Sūfī orders also developed a much wider influence and the '*ulamā* travelled extensively, creating an extensive, intricate network of religious scholars. This period also has a broader historical importance for the Islamic world as a whole, and not only for the subcontinent. The eighteenth century is a complex period with varied events and experiences. It witnessed revivalist movements, discussions on Muslim identity, and politically active reform movements amid growing interference and consolidation of foreign powers. As

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the largest Muslim empires—the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal—declined, each region was involved in changes brought on by both global and local factors.

This study focuses on the Upper Doab region of South Asia, to chart elements of continuity and change in the traditions, rituals, and experiences of the Chishtī-Sābrīs during the transitional phase from the late medieval to the early modern period (*ca*. 1750–1860). It was during this period that **(p.4)** their activities were most conspicuous and proved decisive for Muslims in British India. These years roughly cover the period from Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1762) to the Uprising of 1857 and the subsequent establishment of Dārul ʻulūm in Deoband—this was a period of interesting socio-religious transformations that need further exploration. This book presents evidence of a remarkable resilience and flexibility in the Chishtī-Sābrī order, which enabled it to shape religious and intellectual trends among South Asian Muslims through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. It also brings out the interrelationships between Sufism and the revivalist movements in north India—a topic that, in the South Asian context, has hardly been looked into. Many of the *tajdīd* (renewal) movements of the twentieth century drew significantly on Sūfī traditions, which should be kept in mind for a balanced perspective on the role of Muslim religious leadership. By tracing the processes that created that vibrant leadership and the role of Sufism and its institutions in those processes, the Sūfī antecedents to the later *tajdīd* movements can be properly appreciated. A key argument here is that Sufism was not always contradictory or hostile to revivalist trends. To the contrary, there also existed a positive, collaborative relationship between the two traditions. Exploring that relationship yields a more nuanced approach to understanding the formation of the South Asian Muslim identity. Also, by tracing elements of continuity and change in the rites, practices, and ideas of the Chishtī-Sābrī order, this study challenges the view of Sufism as an inflexible relic of the traditional past, hardly touched by socio-political changes around it, and in any case, within its own ‘higher’ world, resistant to reform.

Some Historiographical Trends: *Ihyā’-o-Tajdīd* Movements[5]

Modern scholarship has often perceived a clear division separating the *ʻālim* (religious scholar: pl. *ʻulamā*) and Sūfī traditions in South Asian **(p.5)** Islam. This perception implies that the Islamic spiritual traditions of the Sūfis and the modern reformist movements led by the *ʻulamā* were opposed to one another. Modern scholarship then ignores or minimizes the contributions of Sūfī *shaikh*s to *ihyā’-o-tajdīd* (revival and renewal), viewing them as insignificant as compared to those of the *ʻulamā*. This approach is evident in some of the pioneering works done in the field. Since its first publication in 1982, Barbara Metcalf’s study of Deoband remains an extremely important work. Based on an extensive study of *tazkirah* (biographical) literature, it brings out the social milieu of the Deobandī *ʻulamā* and the process of ‘interiorization of reform’.[6] Other important studies, such as those by Francis Robinson and Avril Powell, also highlight the resilience of the *ʻulamā*, their engagement with colonial modernity, and their continued

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presence in the public sphere.[7] More recently, Muhammad Qasim Zaman's work on important aspects of religious change relating to the '*ulamā* of contemporary South Asian Islam is a welcome addition to the field.[8] These works have undoubtedly inspired our understanding of the South Asian '*ulamā*, but aspects of Sufism are generally outside their purview. Only recently have scholars started to question this model of 'metaphysical bipolarity' and suggest that the two traditions at times overlap.[9] The present study builds on this argument to explain the historical processes that enabled this overlap to take place.

Perhaps the only Sūfī order which, in terms of involvement in the revivalist upsurge, has attracted scholarly attention has been the Naqshbandīyya, often regarded as a more visible and influential strand among the South Asian Sūfīs. The Naqshbandī programmes of *ihyā'-o-tajdīd* have **(p.6)** been explored in depth by Warren Fusfeld, Harlan Pearson, and Arthur Buehler, among others.[10] The transnational Naqshbandī presence during the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries and its significance has also been studied.[11] With the exception of Naqshbandīs, Sūfīs generally have not been given their due in initiating the *tajdīd* efforts; instead, Sufism has often been represented as highly syncretic, addressing the needs of populist religion or of semi-converted masses.

Indeed, the writings of Ian Talbot, Sarah Ansari, Usha Sanyal, Claudia Liebeskind, and others emphasize that Sūfī institutions had a more reactive outlook towards *tajdīd* programmes.[12] These works either showcase Sufism as a shrine-centred institution reactionary to reform efforts, or portray Sūfīs as owners of large land holdings with considerable influence and explain how they exploited new conditions for their own benefit. For example, Sarah Ansari and Ian Talbot write about how Sūfīs and the shrine superiors of the Punjab and Sindh regions were able to retain their influence by 'striking bargains' with the British. Claudia Liebeskind, in an interesting case-study of Sūfī shrines of the Awadh region, highlights the Sūfīs' response to colonial modernity. Usha Sanyal's pioneering study of Ahmad Razā Khān presents another case where Sūfīs are seen as battling reformist currents.

The belief that Sūfī and 'scriptural' Islam do not go hand-in-hand relates closely to the so-called Decline Theory, which was first put forward in the work of A. J. Arberry and J. S. Trimingham. This theory suggests that Sufism was suited to 'medieval' societies and at odds with **(p.7)** the temperament and concerns of eighteenth century reformist Islam. Arberry, while accepting that Sufism even in its 'period of decay retained some ennobling features', concludes that 'though the Sūfī orders continued—and in many countries continue—to hold the interest and allegiance of ignorant masses, no man of education would come to speak in their favour'.[13] In the same vein, ignoring the vast cumulative tradition of Sufism spanning large tracts of time and space, Trimingham formulated a three-stage development of Sufism with 'classicism' preceding 'decline' and 'fragmentation'.[14] Trimingham's ambitious explanatory scheme neglected the

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regional diversity within Sufism. It failed to appreciate that during the colonial period many orders debated internal reform and expressed their spiritual traditions through new idioms of discourse, often in combination with other orders.[15] Fritz Meier also explained the development of Sufism in a similar scheme—pre-classical, classical, post-classical, and neo-classical Sufism.[16] More recently, Ira Lapidus replicated the model of a Sufism that declined from the era of charismatic individual to that of a static tomb cult.[17] Charles Lindholm proposed that, despite its great historical influence, by the twentieth century Sufism had ceased to be a moving force in the Middle East, though it remained potent in South Asia.[18] Another proponent of this view is Elwell Sutton, who suggested: 'It could … be argued that Sufism no longer has a role to play. In both East and West it has travelled far from the spiritual sources out of which it grew, and has for the most part degenerated into a narrow, desiccated formalism.'[19]

(p.8) In their critique of the decline theory, Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence have argued that it is the outcome of ignorance of the contributions of regional Sūfī orders that continued to flourish in colonial settings.[20] The criticism seems valid, for as compared to studies done on colonial experiences of Sūfī orders beyond South Asia, the literature available for South Asia is meagre and often one-sided. Compared to the work of historians and sociologists such as D. F. Eickelman, M. Berger, Cruise O'Brien, M. Gilsenan, Rex O' Fahey,[21] and others who explored varied Sūfī responses to the colonial set-up in Africa and West Asia, South Asian Sufism is largely shown as retaliatory, unresponsive, or submissive to the reformist challenges.[22] Modern scholarship needs to attend to the local Sūfī orders that thrived in the *qasbah* environment, study their colonial experiences, highlight regional diversities, and bring out the strong Sūfī antecedents that many of the modern reformist traditions shared. The present study is a move in this direction. By focusing on the experiences of the Chishtī-Sābrī establishment in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab, it makes a case for a nuanced interaction between the 'spiritual' and 'scriptural' traditions of Islam. In this interaction the scholarly and family connections and networks which spread across the *qasbah*s in colonial India played a crucial role. These networks, forged by family linkages and, more often, by teacher–disciple relationships, contributed a great deal to the religious mood of the times.

As compared to studies of the religious leadership that thrived in Delhi, Lucknow, and other larger cities of north India, relatively few studies have explored the experiences of local Sūfī establishments firmly rooted in the *qasbah*s of north India. Attention has been given to the importance of **(p.9)** these repositories of Muslim culture in C. A. Bayly's *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983) and Mushirul Hasan's *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh* (Delhi, 2004).[23] In other works, *qasbah*s are often identified with elements of popular Sufism and a custom-ridden Islam. This was particularly true for the Awadh region, as noted in the works of Muzaffar Alam

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and Claudia Liebeskind.[24] Mushirul Hasan, in his study of colonial Awadh, also points to 'clearly popular, as opposed to scriptural Islam' influencing *qasbah* life.[25] In a more recent study by Raisur Rahman, *qasbah*s have been seen as centres of vibrant intellectual dialogue and literary production in the late nineteenth century.[26]

This study approaches the *qasbah*s from a different angle. Here they appear not just as centres of syncretic trends or popular Islam; but also as incubators of reformist messages. These *qasbah*s were not insular little worlds, but actively engaged in a substantive intellectual interaction with Delhi, and they helped in the proliferation of the reformist message of Walīullāhī scholars. By anchoring themselves in the *qasbah*s of the Upper Doab, the Chishtī-Sābrīs became the conduits of Sūfī reform in suburban areas. It was in the local *khānqāh*s and *madrasah*s that the esoteric traditions (*'ulūm-i-bātin*) of Islam were nurtured, sustained, and reformulated, and where an adaptive, resilient leadership emerged to respond to the needs of its community in the nineteenth century.

By looking at the *qasbah* environment during the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, the book suggests that the sharp boundaries drawn between the *'ālim* and Sūfī traditions become much more blurred in the **(p.10)** period than has often been admitted in the literature on modern reformist movements. It brings out the spirit of rapprochement of Sūfī–*'ālim* relations, a prominent development in the eighteenth century, enabling the religious scholars to expand their earlier role as spiritual masters and engage more directly with everyday contingencies as moral tutors and religious counsellors.[27] The Chishtī-Sābrīs thus emerged as leaders in multifarious roles: as Sūfīs they sustained the subtleties of mystic practices and experiences; as scholars they collaborated with the *'ulamā* to define and establish Islamic norms in a Muslim society that had lost political power; as activists they were influenced by the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad (d. 1831) and participated in military opposition to colonial rule; and as moral tutors they embodied in their own conduct the ideals of Islamic piety and righteousness for their community. Their influence, accordingly, became more widespread and more persistent during the British period. In this rapprochement the role of Hājī Imdādullāh (d. 1899), a leading *shaikh* of the order, is especially striking. While being the spiritual mentor of *'ulamā* who founded Islamic seminaries (*madrasah*s) in different towns, Imdādullāh was also a practising Sūfī who defended and conserved the core Chishtī devotional practices. A primary concern of this study is to identify Sūfī traditions and institutions within the *'ulamā* discourses of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries.

The Chishtī-Sābrīs offer an interesting case of a Sūfī institution that strongly advocated the speculative mysticism of the Andalusian theosophist Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), and was nurtured in the pluralist ethos of medieval Awadh, but which—far from being fiercely opposed to or opposed by the reformist zeal of the period—became a part of it. By drawing close to the Naqshbandīs, the Chishtī-Sābrīs

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came to exhibit many of the trends prevalent within the Walīullāhī tradition and the ‘reformist school’ of Delhi. In this and other ways, the order was adaptive to the socio-political conditions of nineteenth-century British India, developing a leadership that merged with the elite of the ‘*ulamā* without renouncing its core Sūfī disciplines, traditions, and temperament. The argument presented here supports the view that total rejection of Sufism (as espoused by the Wahhābī movement in Arabia) was the exception, not the rule, in the eighteenth century. Rather, as John Voll has emphasized, ‘many revivalist movements took place within **(p.11)** a reformulated Sufi-tradition—one that still adhered to its mystical heritage while addressing the questions posed by colonial rule’.[28]

That such a ‘reformulated Sūfī tradition’, in its historical expression in the eighteenth century, should have both strong global and local features is surely unsurprising. The emergence of such ‘reformed’ Sūfī orders from Morocco to Malaysia at around the same time points to the commonalities of response across this vast region. But at the same time, it was the result of diverse local needs and aspirations. It is difficult to safely judge how much these movements shared with one another until we have more detailed comparative studies and a better understanding of contacts between them, either directly or indirectly through the pilgrimage to the Hijaz. The thesis of a ‘neo-Sufism’, first put forward by Fazlur Rahman, developed by J. S. Trimingham, B. G. Martin, John Voll, and Ira Lapidus and contested by B. Radtke and R. S. O’ Fahey, has highlighted the broad commonalities that these movements shared.[29] The term ‘neo-Sufism’ indicates a direction of reform within Sufism more or less inspired by the pressure of the ‘orthodox’, so that the ‘reform’ has rather the character of a ‘retreat’. However, the impulse to reform, renew, and revive did not come only from outside and from the ‘orthodox’. Rather, as this book illustrates in the case of the Chishtī-Sābrī order, it was driven from within the Sūfī tradition. Thus, while urging the adherence to Sharī‘at and Sunnat that, with much else, ‘neo-Sufism’ strenuously advocated, the Chishtī-Sābrīs remained equally well committed to their rich, sanctified past, not just formally through chains of spiritual initiations (*shajra*), but actively through their daily rites and their devotional and spiritual teachings.

(p.12) South Asian ‘*Ulamā* in the Colonial Setting

In India as in other parts of the Muslim world, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed a lively activism among Muslims, evident in the movements of *tajdīd*, the emergence of new ideas about how to deal creatively with the challenging situations unfolding for many sections of Muslims, and diverse interpretations of what should be considered ‘true’ Islam. The movements and activism that germinated in the eighteenth century and surfaced more prominently in the latter half of the nineteenth century have influenced our understanding of Islam to the present. Similar-looking developments can be seen across the Muslim world as it came under political and military pressure from European powers. However, these developments were moulded by local

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circumstances and the perspectives of local leaders, so that they are similar only in very broad terms. Most of the movements, for instance, were what Kenneth Jones calls 'movements of return',[30] emphasizing fresh interpretation of the original scriptures while throwing off *taqlīd* (conservative adherence to the past rulings of established schools of law). Their leaders, invariably the '*ulamā*, troubled by the prevailing conditions of loss of Islam's prestige and influence in the world, explained it as the consequence of defective adherence to the religion, a resulting 'moral corruption', and political enfeeblement. Since the '*ulamā* blamed the actions (*a'māl*) of the Muslims for their condition, a 'moral reform' (*islāh*) was the necessary imperative to set things right. The '*ulamā*, viewing and representing themselves as guardians of Islamic tradition and culture, took on this task.

Since medieval times, the '*ulamā* had enjoyed great influence in Indo-Muslim society.[31] Generally, they had worked in close association with **(p.13)** political power. They received patronage and charitable grants from the Mughal empire and its successor entities; providing implicit (at times, explicit) religious sanction for the rulers' policies in return. Often, they became involved in political machinations of power, siding with one or the other political clique, and gaining or losing thereby. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Mughal Empire was a weak shadow of its former self and the absence of a temporal authority to foster religious learning created new anxieties among the '*ulamā*. The major question being asked was how a Muslim society should be sustained without a supporting political power. The only practicable option at the time was to fall back on their traditions and search for new interpretations and actions. The eighteenth–nineteenth centuries saw repeated efforts on the part of religious scholars to retain their former influential positions under the new colonial regime.[32] This was accomplished through several ways: participation in movements of *tajdīd*, adoption of printing technology to enlarge their constituency, and the establishment of *madrasah*s to teach and preserve the Islamic heritage and scholarship in the Indo-Muslim society.

In South Asia, the lead was provided by Shāh Walīullāh. After an exhaustive study of Islamic sciences, philosophy, and theology, he achieved an unprecedented success in re-thinking and adapting (*tatbīq*), that would provide the ideological underpinning and platform for many later developments. His influence on posterity was extraordinarily pronounced. Nearly every religious movement that appeared over the next century was connected to him, directly or through spiritual or ideological affiliation. His return from the Hijaz signals the emphasis on the study **(p.14)** of Prophetic traditions (Hadīs) that he introduced in the Madrasah-i-Rahīmia (a renowned *madrasah* of eighteenth-century Delhi), and to which the later religious movements gave priority in varying degrees. His immediate successors produced, on the one hand, a new genre of *fatāwa* (sing. *fatwā*) literature and emphasized jurisprudential studies; on the other hand, they took the more dramatic, though unsuccessful, path of military resistance to

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British rule. Whether it be the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad (often grossly misunderstood and misrepresented as the 'Indian Wahhābī' movement),[33] the theological seminaries at Deoband and elsewhere, or the still vibrant Tablīgh movement of Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās (d. 1944)[34]—they all drew inspiration from Shāh Walīullāh.

The successive generations of *'ulamā* assessed the situation independently and responded in different ways, striving to modify people's behaviour according to their understanding of Islam. Barbara Metcalf notes that the religious movements of the time differed in their interpretation of *fiqh*, their appeal to social classes, and in their political stance or religious views, and often assumed an exclusivist character. With the emergence of a 'public space', debates (*munāzarah*) on what constitutes proper belief and practice in Islam became more common, and contributed to the intensification of this exclusivist temper.[35] The *'ulamā* were unable to sustain the broadly inclusive orientation of Shāh Walīullāh's thought, and **(p.15)** by overemphasizing one or the other element, they gradually hardened into distinct, and often competing, groups.[36]

These competitive groups took different views of Sufism, at times questioning its customs, practices, teachings, and philosophies. A few repudiated Sufism in its entirety, but most were sympathetic to it and opposed only what they regarded as its excesses. They spoke against the speculative mysticism of Ibn 'Arabī and criticized Sūfī rituals such as *samā'* (Sūfī assemblies where spiritually uplifting musical performances, usually without instruments, were listened to), *'urs* (celebrations to mark the death anniversaries of prominent Sūfīs) and *bai'at* (the oath of allegiance taken by a Sūfī aspirant, signifying initiation into a Sūfī order). They demanded, in varying degrees, a renunciation of *taqlīd*, and undermined the basis of authority of many Sūfī *shaikh*s by criticizing popular trust in their role as religious mediators, the veneration accorded to them, the visitation of their tombs and shrines, any form of spiritual hierarchy, and so forth.

The most extreme and trenchant critics of Sufism in British India were the Ahl-i-Hadīs, who believed that Sufism itself, and not just its excesses, were a threat to Islam. They rejected Sufism and the different rituals connected with it, prohibited *'urs* and *qawwālī* (popular religious singing), denounced all forms of pilgrimage except hajj, condemned speculations on the nature of God (which some Sūfīs entertained), and the excessive veneration of *pīr*s.[37] Thus, as Arthur Buehler notes, mediation, spiritual hierarchy, and personal charismatic authority —the three interwoven elements of Sufism—were anathema to them.[38]

(p.16) The Ahl-i-Hadīs *'ulamā* were exceptional in their total, unqualified rejection of *taqlīd*, something that others had done more circumspectly. This was a major challenge for the Sūfīs since the very basis of their authority depended on spiritual linkages, unbroken chains of lineage and mystical knowledge, and continuity in traditions from a sanctified past. Also, the reformers, as staunch

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advocates of *tauhīd*, objected fervently to the metaphysical speculations of Ibn ʻArabī, which to them appeared clearly pantheistic and contradictory to the primary tenets of Islam. The rejection of the doctrine of Unity of Being (*wahdat-ul-wujūd*), the very heart of Ibn ʻArabī's theosophy, created a difficult situation for adherents of the Chishtī order, who had always been devoutly faithful to it.

While Ahl-i-Hadīs represented one extreme position in their criticism of Sufism, the Barelwīs represented the other extreme in their support of a 'customary' Sufism.[39] Most of the other movements steered a middle path and gave Sufism its due while critiquing what they felt were unnecessary accretions. The fact that the founders of many such movements were positively inclined towards Sufism in their early life could well be the reason for such a stance. Thus, institutions like Firangī Mahal (Lucknow), related to the Qādirī Sūfī ʻAbdul Razzāq Banswī (d. 1724), sought to reconcile the traditional educational heritage with an inclination towards Sufism. The Dārul ʻulūm (est. 1867, Deoband), drawing inspiration from both the Chishtī and Naqshbandī Sūfī traditions, was most sympathetic to Sufism. Both these institutions emphasized the intellectual teachings of Sufism while distancing themselves from customs not considered an integral part of mystic discipline, notably, the belief in the intercession of Sūfī *pīr*s, celebrating their death anniversaries (*ʻurs*), *ziyārat* or visiting the graves of *pīr*s for fulfilment of wishes, and other practices that appeared to them closer to non-Islamic customs.

It needs to be stressed that the movement of Saiyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly (in contrast to Wahhābī contemporaries in Arabia) also did not denounce Sufism. His denunciation of some Sūfī practices was extensive, but by no means an unqualified rejection of Sufism as such. Rather, it was an attempt to evaluate certain beliefs and practices with the object of assimilating them in his reform insofar as they did not contradict the temper and perspective of Sharīʻat. In *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm*, a work embodying the teachings of Saiyid Ahmad, some of the prevalent habits of the **(p.17)** so-called 'heretics in Sufistic garb' are critiqued—such as their conceptions of and ways of addressing God (as influenced by Ibn ʻArabī's doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*); their excessive reverence shown for *pīr*s and the rites performed at their graves; their imploring help from the dead; and the custom of *nazr-o-niyāz* (offering of food to the poor in order to bless the soul of the dead).[40]

Most reform movements continued to regard Sufism as a branch of higher religious knowledge, provided it remained in accord or within the boundaries of the Sharīʻat. They believed that those fully conversant with Islamic Law should tread the mystic path. The kind of Sūfī leader that these movements could respect was similar to what Arthur Buehler has termed a 'directing' or 'teaching' *shaikh*, an educator and an exemplar of moral character and piety; instead of mediating between the disciple and God, he would direct them to get to know God personally and directly.[41] In fact, Sūfī influences so permeated society that

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many of the reformers who later became critics of the excesses in Sufism had themselves been influenced by it in their early lives. The most striking example is perhaps that of Muhammad b. ʻAbdul Wahhāb (d. 1792), the founder of the Wahhābī movement of Arabia that repudiated Sufism in almost all forms.[42] However, ʻAbdul Wahhāb had himself been influenced by it in Isfahan, where he is said to have studied Peripatetic philosophy, the Ishraqiya, and Sūfī systems for four years, and enrolled students of mysticism.[43] Indian reformers including Hājī Sharīʻatullāh (d. 1840) and **(p.18)** Islamic modernists such as Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān (d. 1898), Jamāl-ud-dīn Afghānī (d. 1897), and Muhammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) also came into contact with Sufism early in their lives.

Besides these attacks on the practices and rituals of Sufism, there were other challenges prompted by the political and cultural situation, as influenced by Western interventions. As noted by Francis Robinson, the revivalist movements resulted in a shift of emphasis from ‘other-worldly’ to ‘this-worldly’ concerns, whereby instead of reflecting on the mysteries of God, a person was encouraged to contemplate his own actions. There was an emphasis on self-instrumentality, on considering oneself responsible for one’s own actions and situation. This led to the development of a ‘willed Islam’ stripped of all its enchantments, directed to right action.[44] The Mujāhidīn movement of Saiyid Ahmad was an early example of this trend in South Asia. The demand that an individual be responsible for himself undermined the authority and role of Sūfī *shaikh*s as a means of salvation and as mediators between man and God. Understandably, the traditional religious leadership of Sūfīs regarded this as a potentially threatening trend.

Also, the replacement of Muslim political regimes with colonial governments affected the intellectual and at times material underpinnings of Sufism. There was no longer a temporal authority towards which Sūfīs could look to safeguard the Islamic ethos of their communities or to patronize religious institutions and functionaries. Those Sufis who had enjoyed rent-free grants of land under the former regimes were forced to make terms with the new regime in order to retain their possessions. Those who did not possess such holdings perceived the decline of Muslim empires worldwide as alarming, because they saw it in religious terms. They attempted to enlarge their constituency by becoming responsive to Muslims who increasingly sought religious and spiritual guidance on everyday issues like acceptance of Western goods and Western education **(p. 19)** and so forth. The huge number of *fatwā*s produced during this period testifies to the new concerns.[45]

Sūfī relationships were based on human networks, personal relations, and medieval social patterns. Over the nineteenth century, such social relations were turning into more bureaucratic, depersonalized arrangements, generating new areas of tension for Sūfīs and other Muslim religious leaders.[46] Historians such as J. S. Trimingham have seen these processes of secularization and consequent

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changes in the social order as a major factor in the ‘decline of Sufism’ in modern times.[47] The person-to-person relationships that were so fundamental in the transmission of Sūfī disciplines and wisdom were increasingly challenged by the print culture. To be sure, the use of the lithographic press assisted Sūfī *shaikh*s by enabling the distribution of their teachings on a much larger scale, circulation of their ideas to both critics and supporters, ensuring outreach to their relatively dispersed *murīd* community, and (through the translation of *malfūzāt*—Sūfī discourses—from Persian to Urdu) building awareness of the pious lives of their ancestors. Yet the subtle and more serious implication of this technology was that Sūfī orders were no longer the best means of communicating the mysteries of the spiritual world.[48] It contested the need for personal mediation and challenged Sufism as a community of esoteric practice. It was for this reason that the Sūfī attitude towards acceptance of print was ambivalent. While some quickly **(p.20)** adopted it to spread their constituency of disciples, others perceived it as a threat.[49] They reaffirmed the superior virtues of oral transmission and the need for personal interaction with the *shaikh*.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, Western education in the colonial set-up was undermining the Perso–Islamic culture that was the lynchpin of Sūfī institutions. The intellectual dimensions of the Islamic spiritual movement were becoming inaccessible to the Muslim youth trained in Western languages. Although this issue became more pertinent towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was serious enough by middle of the century to cause a dilemma in Muslim minds about whether the English language should be accepted or not. In sum, the challenging centuries of British dominance in India provided both elements of continuity and also incentives for change in Sūfī leadership by opening up new spheres of action.

Sūfism and a Period of New Challenges

For any Sūfī order in the eighteenth–nineteenth century, its success or failure depended on how skilfully it was able to mould or transform its traditions to suit the needs of the time. Responses differed according to the Sūfī leaders’ understanding of the local situations and their individual personalities. Thus in some parts of the world, Sūfī orders became vehicles for the spread of Islam and contemplative piety, while in other parts they became involved in armed resistance against colonial aggression and occupation, or in other cases, became conduits of social and religious reform.[50]

As I mentioned earlier, research on the responses of Sūfī orders to colonial pressures has largely been restricted to North Africa, West **(p.21)** Asia, and Turkey. These studies have shown varied experiences of Sūfī institutions. Significantly, they also suggest a continued presence and popularity of Sūfī orders through the nineteenth century. For instance, their role in Africa over the century was so prominent that Rex O’Fahey, a leading authority on African

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Sufism, has termed it ‘Muslim Africa’s Sūfī century’,[51] a large claim that does not seem inappropriate in light of the dynamism of Sūfī orders in colonial Africa. While some moulded the colonial environment effectively and pragmatically to their own benefit, militant opposition to colonialism was also not uncommon. The three greatest militant movements to challenge colonial expansion in Africa were launched by Sūfīs: ‘Abdul Qādir Jazairī (d. 1883), against the French in Algeria, ‘Umar bin Sa‘īd Fūtī (d. 1864), also against the French in the Senegambia region, and ‘Abdille Hasan (d. 1920), against the British in Somalia.[52]

Armed resistance was not, however, the rule. Especially, the Sūfī orders that had emerged recently, took to peaceful accommodation and not militant confrontation. After the consolidation of colonial systems, many leaders tried to preserve their spiritual independence by reconciling to the new forms of government. By avoiding political entanglement and preserving their credibility as spiritual guides, they emerged as heads of autonomous branches of their brotherhoods. The colonial authorities, acknowledging the influence of these orders in Muslim societies, allowed them to operate as quasi-official religious representatives of their respective communities in return for their endorsement of the colonial system of government. A good example of such pragmatic leaderships can be noticed among the Tijānī leaders Malik Sy (d. 1922) and **(p. 22)** Ibrahīm Niāss (d. 1975). In the words of Jamil Abun Nasr, ‘Neither was a rebel against colonial authorities nor their stooge; and while retaining their allegiance to the spiritual authority of their brotherhood’s founder and adherence to its religious norms, they both adapted its teachings, albeit in different ways, to the specific religious communal needs that Muslims faced in the colonial period.’[53]

Most of the studies on colonial impact on Sufism have suggested that coping with challenges was easier for those orders that had emerged within the colonial framework. Michael Gilsenan concluded in his study of the Hamīdiya order that, because of its newness, strong regulations, and highly centralized control, it has not been rendered redundant by the processes of social change in Egypt.[54] Likewise, another recent Senegalese Sūfī order called Murīdiya (Mourides), as shown by Cruise O’Brien, remained active in the period of decolonization by taking advantage of rural enfranchisement.[55] Berger’s analysis of the Sūfī organizations in Egypt shows, that despite decline in their political power and economic relevance, they still perform religious and other social functions, albeit in a vastly altered setting.[56] Besides these newly emerged orders, even some long-established spiritual traditions, such as those of marabouts, continued to dominate rural and urban Islam throughout North Africa till the end of the nineteenth century.[57] Some orders such as the ‘Āshira-Muhammadia order of Egypt defended their **(p.23)** mystical heritage and their leaders emerged as champions of traditional ‘Sūfī Islam’.[58]

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These regional studies on Africa, Turkey, and Central Asia show that Sūfī orders actually thrived in times of adversity. Berger, for instance, points out that social stresses and strong authoritarian trends in twentieth-century Egypt 'sent people searching for relief in those few corners of social life where self-direction, trust and intimacy are still possible'. This, he believes, revived Sufism in the midst of what is called a general decline.[59] Of similar opinions are Bennigsen and Wimbush who, in their study of mystic orders of China, saw Sufism flourishing during the Cultural Revolution, when Islam in China came under fierce attack.[60] The most enduring legacy among non-African Sūfī orders was of the Khālidī branch of the Naqshbandī order, which had become paramount in Turkey, even surpassing the Mevlevi order centred in Konya. It supplanted all other branches of the Naqshbandī order in Kurdistan and wrested supremacy from the Qādirī order in the region. Since the late eighteenth century, it pursued a jihad against the Czarist regime in northern Caucasus. Even after the proscription of Sūfī orders in Turkey in 1925, certain Naqshbandī and Khālidī leaders continued to be active and integrated themselves into the political structure of Turkey.[61] In the former Soviet Union also, Sufism followed different patterns. In some places Sūfīs became part of the ruling establishment (such as in Bukhara and Khiva), in others they became involved in an intellectual renaissance (such as in the Tatar regions), and in still others places they inspired and led popular resistance (such as in the northern Caucasus and the Farghana valley).[62] The impact of Sufism did not recede with the advance **(p.24)** of Communism and despite the proscription of Sūfī organizations in Russia, the orders did not disappear.

Studies like those surveyed above explore the impact of colonialism on Sūfī orders and the resilience in their response. Studies of a similar nature on Sufism in the South Asian context are unfortunately lacking, and it is the '*ulamā* who largely dominate the scholarly literature. Sufism is presented in most studies as a shrine-based institution. The *pīr*s of Sindh, for instance, showed a great ability to survive through the British Raj by becoming reliable intermediaries between it and the local population. 'By striking "bargains" with the authorities,' writes Sarah Ansari, 'they were willing to rethink their traditional roles and take advantage by asserting their influential position in local society.'[63] Those Sūfī shrines that owned large tracts of land during the Mughal rule tried to retain them by passively supporting British rule and in return were not divested of their holdings. Even in the late 1890s the Chishtī shrine of Bābā Farīd at Pakpattan had managed to keep under its control one-tenth (43,000 acres) of all land of the district. Likewise in Multan, 5,000 acres of land remained attached to the shrine of Shaikh Bahā-ud-dīn Zakariya of the Suhrawardī order.[64]

Claudia Liebeskind's work on the shrines of Awadh, a region steeped in the syncretic trends typical of Mughal India, shows interesting patterns of reaction from Sūfī establishments. At Kakori for instance, few concessions were made and they continued with '*urs*, *mīlād*, viewing of relics, lighting of tombs, recitation of *fātiha*, and so on. At the Khānqāh-i-Karīmia in Salon, although Hadīs

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scholarship gained popularity among *sajjāda-nashīn*s (heads of the shrine), they had a ‘split personality’ with regard to reforms. While dealing with the Muslim elite they showed sympathy towards reforms, but when dealing with the local population, primarily Hindus, they continued their ‘unreformed’ customs.[65] The *khānqāh* at Salon enjoyed considerable land grants, the annual income of the shrine in the mid-nineteenth century being estimated by the British Resident in Awadh, Colonel William Sleeman, at Rs. 50,000.[66] **(p.25)** Another Sūfī institution, of Wāris ʻAlī Shāh at Dewa, did not incorporate the reformist message in its rituals but their spiritual message took on the colour of Islamic reform. For instance, Wāris ʻAlī Shāh tried to strip down unnecessary customs as with the elaborate rites at the time of taking *baiʻat*.[67] Fritz Lehmann also suggests a similar response from the Sūfī *khānqāh*s of the Bihar region. His surveys at Sasaram, Patna, Phulwari Sharif, Bihar Sharif, and Bhagalpur note a continued survival of *khānqāh*s, to which Muslims of all social levels were emotionally attached as they provided both psychological support and more tangible services.[68]

By tracing the experiences of the Chishtī-Sābrīs, this book shows evidence of a response different from those noted in the current scholarship on South Asian Islam. In its traditions and working, this order was markedly different from those surveyed above. It was not a product of the colonial era. It was a long-established Sūfī order whose earliest traditions were formed not under any colonial pressures but under the syncretic religious environment of medieval Awadh. Its leaders viewed colonial rule from the perspective of a previously existing assemblage of beliefs and traditions. Though nurtured in the pluralist ethos of Awadh, the order did not develop into a shrine-centred institution. Based in *qasbah*s of the Upper Doab, the order’s leaders, instead of merely reacting negatively to reformist pressures, moulded their understanding of Sufism to embrace some reformist demands. More particularly, they skilfully created a relevant, effective Muslim leadership by combining the roles of *ʻālim* and Sūfī. They helped to preserve Muslim identity through religious education and an independent *khānqāh–madrasah* system. This study thus recounts the trajectory of a spiritual order that transformed itself from a pluralist institution to a relatively more ‘reformed’ establishment, and became the seed-bed for Dārul ʻulūm and other Islamic seminaries in the nineteenth century.

Structure of the Work

This study draws on Urdu and Persian source materials. These include local/family histories, *tazkirah*s or biographical dictionaries, *malfūzāt* **(p.26)** (Sufi discourses), and *maktūbāt* (letter collections). While the hagiographical nature of some of these sources needs to be borne in mind, they do enable, if perused in their own conceptual framework, a clearer understanding of Sūfī institutions and ideas. These source materials are important for different reasons.

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An understanding of *qasbah*s and their ethos is not possible without taking into account the local and family records, which reveal, besides a general history of the town, the interconnectedness of its people, the allegiance of the *ashrāf* ('noble') families to religious institutions, their land holdings, and their associations with political establishments. The *tazkirah*s reveal the worldviews of their compilers and help us to understand how the followers of a *shaikh* viewed his life and teachings, and the values they sought to inculcate among their readers. The *sawānih hayāt* (life stories) also serve a similar function for the historian.

The practice of writing *malfūzāt* had become increasingly widespread in South Asia from the thirteenth century. Given the deep-rootedness of Sūfīs in society, these records of conversations provide an invaluable source of information about the concerns of common people and the development of religious thought in different social registers. They also elucidate spiritual matters and reflect the modes of thought of the respective age.

Some mystical treatises and devotional manuals dealing specifically with the spiritual exercises (*riyāzāt*) provide an insight into the spiritual world of the Sūfī discipline. In the effort to expand Sūfī networks in the *qasbah*s, it was imperative for the leadership to maintain close connections with disciples sent to diverse locations. For this reason, *maktūbāt* (letter collections) abound for the period under study. Their contents cover different aspects of life—some deal with general teachings and mystic subtleties; some discuss religious problems or answer the queries of disciples; some were written as letters of recommendation for jobs; and some provide *nasīhat* (good advice) to followers or, at times, to rulers and nobles at the court.

Drawing information from these varied types of sources, this book studies the dynamism of a Sūfī order in British India and brings out the gradual changes in the nature and role of its leadership. Chapter 1 reviews the background of the main traditions of the Chishtī-Sābrī order as they had grown from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Chapter 2 studies the beginning of *ihyā'-o-tajdīd* movements in Shāh Walīullāh's **(p.27)** Delhi. It focuses on the different intellectual trends that were becoming prominent, mainly as a result of the activities of religious scholars trained in Walīullāhī traditions. These trends affected the religious ethos of British North India and eventually produced the reform movements. They are discussed at two levels: at the institutional level (the emergence of joint *khānqāh–madrasah*s, the amalgamation of Sūfī–*'ālim* traditions, and the intermingling of Sūfī orders) and at the ideological level (the growing emphasis on Sharī'at and scriptures and the corresponding adjustments in religious thought). Over the nineteenth century, the Chishtī-Sābrī establishment in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab was increasingly drawn towards

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these trends owing to the complex spiritual networks that helped accelerate the process of *ihyā’-o-tajdīd* in suburban areas.

Chapter 3 discusses Sūfī experiences in the *qasbah* environment of the eighteenth century. The *qasbah* of Amroha was the first major centre of Chishtī-Sābrī activity in the Upper Doab. Drawing mainly on indigenous works such as family histories, biographies, and Sūfī discourses, it picks out the role of three Sābrī *shaikh*s of Amroha—Shāh ‘Azd-ud-dīn Ja‘frī (d. 1758), Shāh ‘Abdul Hādī (d. 1776), and Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī (d. 1811)—to show how their lives epitomized Sūfī experience in the rural towns of the region. The chapter also brings out the vibrant diversity, cultural richness, and buoyant nature of *qasbah*s as centres of Muslim culture. While concentrating on the ideological orientation of these *shaikh*s, and on elements of continuity and change within the Sūfī order, the chapter explains the significance of the shift in the order’s centre of activity from Awadh to the Upper Doab.

Chapter 4 focuses on the growing interaction between the Chishtī-Sābrīs and the Delhi reformers during the early nineteenth century. While the connections with the Walīullāhi scholars of Delhi, such as Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, Mirzā Mazhar, and Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī were established during the eighteenth century, they were strongly reinforced in the early nineteenth, with the launching of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly. Under the leadership of Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī (d. 1830), Miānjī Nūr Muhammad at Jhinjhana (d. 1843), and Hājī Imdādullāh at Thanabhawan (and later Mecca), the Chishtī-Sābrī order created a vibrant leadership for South Asian Muslims that pioneered the independent *madrasah* system typified by Dārul ‘ulūm at Deoband.

Chapter 5 charts the intellectual dynamism of the Sābrī mystic traditions and the breadth of their influence. By focusing on Hājī Imdādullāh **(p.28)** and his writings and letters, the chapter shows how in the nineteenth century the Chishtī-Sābrīs discussed questions on internal reform and identity, maintained connections with their pre-modern antecedents, and tried to accommodate the changing realities of early British India.

Notes:

([1]) According to ‘Abdul Rahmān Jāmī, the great Persian Sufi poet (d. 1492) Khwāja Abū Muhammad Chishtī arrived with Sultān Mahmūd Ghaznavī and settled in India. However, the credit for giving a firm foundation to the Chishtī order in South Asia must go to Shaikh Mu‘īn-ud-dīn Chishtī (d. 1236), who arrived in Ajmer around the time of the Ghurid conquests: ‘Abdul Rahmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt-ul-uns* (Mumbai, AH 1284), p. 207.

([2]) K. A. Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā’ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 1 (Karachi, 2007), p. 251.

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([3]) Muzaffar Alam, ‘Religion and Politics in Awadh Society: 17th and Early 18th c.’, in *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds) A. L. Dallipiccola and Zingel-Ave Stephanie (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 321–49; Muzaffar Alam, ‘Competition and Co-existence: Indo-Islamic Interaction in Medieval North India’, *Itinerario* 13, no. 1 (1989), pp. 37–60; Muzaffar Alam, ‘Assimilation from a Distance: Confrontation and Sufi Accommodation in Awadh Society’, in *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology*, (eds) R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (Delhi, 1996), pp. 377–98; Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (Delhi, 1998); Francis Robinson, ‘Scholarship and Mysticism in Early 18th c. Awadh’, in *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds) Dallipiccola and Stephanie, pp. 377–98.

([4]) For details on the centrality of the Hijaz in the intellectual life of Muslims during this period, see Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Mass., 2015); Nile Green, ‘Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean’, in *Cosmopolitanism Contested: History and Anthropology in the Western Indian Ocean*, (eds) K. Kresse and E. Simpson (London, 2007), pp. 125–66. See also Dale. F. Eickelman and J. Piscatori (eds), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration and the Religious Imagination* (Berkley, 1990); and Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857–1964* (London, 1967).

([5]) It is important not to confuse the term ‘reform’ in Islamic contexts with the European–Christian concept of ‘reformation’. The expressions used in indigenous sources are *islāh* or *tajdīd*, which can be translated as ‘reform’ and ‘renewal’. Both terms point to efforts to re-model Muslim society with the aspiration to rebuild the moral climate that existed at the time of the Prophet. Thus, ‘reform’ is both a ‘backward’ and ‘forward’ looking concept, urging Muslims to look back to the scriptures and traditional methods to find religiously authoritative solutions to new problems.

([6]) Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982).

([7]) Francis Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia* (Delhi, 2001); Francis Robinson, *Islam, South Asia and the West* (Delhi, 2007); Francis Robinson, *The Ulama of Farangi Mahall and Islamic Culture in South Asia* (Delhi, 2001); Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (London, 1993). See also F. A. Nizami, ‘Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints: Muslim Response to British Presence in Delhi and Upper Doab, 1803–1857’ (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1983).

([8]) M. Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton, 2002).

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([9]) Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Pre-Modern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Enquiry* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p. 99.

([10]) W. Fusfeld, 'The Shaping of Sufi Leadership in Delhi: The Naqshbandiya Mujaddidiya, 1750–1920' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1981); Harlan O. Pearson, *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-Century India: The Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* (New Delhi, 2008); Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The India Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia, 1998).

([11]) M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic, and T. Zarcone (eds), *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order* (Istanbul, 1990). A more recent study is by Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London and New York, 2007).

([12]) Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947* (Delhi, 1988); Sarah Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge, 1992); Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and His Movement* (Delhi, 1996); Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*.

([13]) A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (London, 1950), pp. 119–22.

([14]) See J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), p. 103.

([15]) For a critique refer to, Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York, 2002), p. 14.

([16]) F. Meier, 'The Mystic Path', in *The World of Islam*, (ed.) B. Lewis (London, 1980), pp. 117–25.

([17]) Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 460.

([18]) Charles Lindholm, 'Prophets and Pirs: The Charismatic Islam in the Middle East and South Asia', in *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Loyalty and Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, (eds) Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu (London, 1998), p. 216.

([19]) L. P. Elwell Sutton, 'Sufism and Pseudo-Sufism', in *Islam in the Modern World*, (eds) Denis MacEoin and Ahmed al Shahi (London, 1983), p. 55.

([20]) Ernst and Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love*, p. 14.

([21]) Dale F. Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Traditional Pilgrimage Center* (Austin, 1976); Morroe Berger, *Islam in Egypt Today: Social and Political Aspects of Popular Religion* (London, 1970); B. Donal and Cruise O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal: The Political and Economic Organization of*

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an Islamic Brotherhood (Oxford, 1971); Michael Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt: An Essay in the Sociology of Religion* (Oxford, 1973); Rex O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition* (London, 1990).

([22]) For instance, Charles Lindholm suggests that while Sufi lodges were active participants in the liberation struggles against colonial authority in the Middle East, in South Asia the lodges remained pacifist and accommodative: Lindholm, 'Prophets and Pirs', p. 226.

([23]) C. A. Bayly's study explains how the *qasbah*s thrived during the eighteenth century as political power was 'decentralised' and a rooted service gentry emerged around these townships. Mushirul Hasan considers the nineteenth-century *qasbah* as an arena of social and cultural activities.

([24]) Alam, 'Religion and Politics in Awadh Society'; Alam, 'Competition and Co-existence: Indo-Islamic Interaction in Medieval North India'; Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*. In the writings of Muzaffar Alam, the syncretic and pluralistic *qasbah*s of Awadh and their Sufi traditions have been neatly brought out. Liebeskind has studied the interaction of popular Sufi orders of Awadh with reformist Islam.

([25]) Mushirul Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh* (Delhi, 2004), p. 21.

([26]) M. Raisur Rahman, *Locale, Everyday Islam and Modernity: Qasbah Towns and Muslim Life in Colonial India* (Delhi, 2015).

([27]) Arthur Buehler describes this phenomenon as the emergence of a 'directing shaikh': *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, ch. 2.

([28]) Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll (eds), *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, 1987), p. 9.

([29]) Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago, 2002); Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*; John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, 1982); B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976); Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*; Levtzion and Voll (eds), *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam*. For a critique of the application of this term to the Idrisi, Sanusi, and Tijaniya Sufi movements of Africa, see R. S. O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, 'Neo-Sufism Reconsidered', *Der Islam* 70, no. 1 (1993), pp. 52–87; and Bernd Radtke, 'Ijtihad and Neo Sufism', *Asiatische Studien Etudes Asiatiques* 48, no. 3 (1994), pp. 909–22. For John O. Voll's update on this debate, see 'Neo-Sufism: Reconsidered Again', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 42, nos. 2–3 (2008), pp. 314–30.

([30]) Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 8.

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([31]) The ‘*ulamā* were those who had acquired religious knowledge according to the standards of the age. Their authority and status depended on their devotion to the cause of learning. As custodians of Islamic Law (Sharī‘at), the duty of the ‘*ulamā* was to sustain the community with religious and moral guidance. As Francis Robinson points out, they played several roles in society: as *fuqaha* (sing. *faqih*), they generated and interpreted Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*); as *sadr*s (the Chief Ecclesiastic in Mughal Empire), they recommended and granted *madad-i-maash* (revenue-free grants); as *mufti*s, they provided legal advice; as *qazi*s, they dispensed justice; as *muhtasib*s, they acted as censors of public morals; as *khatib*s and *imam*s, they preached sermons and led congregational prayers; and as scholars, they taught in *madrasah*s funded by the political or social elite. For the various roles played by the ‘*ulamā* in the early history of Islam in India, see also K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (New Delhi, 2002), pp. 160–85; and M. L. Bhatia, *The Ulama, Islamic Ethics and Courts under the Mughals* (Delhi, 2006).

([32]) For their role in the nineteenth century, see F. A. Nizami, ‘Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints’, chs. 4 and 5; and Francis Robinson, ‘Ulama of South Asia from 1800 to the mid-Twentieth Century’, in his *Islam, South Asia, and the West* (Delhi, 2007), pp. 59–98. Among other useful studies is Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*; and Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*.

([33]) ‘Wahhabism’ has often been used as an umbrella term to identify movements throughout the Islamic world that bear some (however remote) resemblance to the ideology of ‘Abdul Wahhāb (d. 1792). For a critique of this term being applied to the Indian case, see Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, pp. 198–205; also, M. A. Bari, ‘A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam’ (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1953).

([34]) For the Tabligh movement of Muhammad Ilyas, see M. K. Masud (ed.), *Travellers in Faith: Studies of Tablighi Jamaat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden, 2000); Y. Sikand, *The Origin and Development of the Tablighi Jamat, 1920–2000* (Delhi, 2002); M. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas* (Leiden, 1972); C. Troll, ‘Two Conceptions of Dawa in India: Jamaat-i-Islami and Tablighi Jamaat’ *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 87 (1994), pp. 115–33.

([35]) For more on the concept of *munāzarah*, see Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*; Akbar Zaidi, ‘Contested Identities and the Muslim Qaum in Northern India: c. 1860–1900’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009).

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([36]) Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, p. 277. For a good example of this ideological fragmentation as seen from the later developments in the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad, see Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, p. 289; Murray Titus, *Islam in India and Pakistan* (Calcutta, 1959), p. 197.

([37]) The Ahl-i-Hadīs leader Sanāullāh Amritsarī (d. 1948) travelled to the shrine of Pīrān-i-Kalyar in Roorkee and was shocked by the practices of lighting candles, circumambulation of graves, and prostration before them. Another leader, Nawāb Siddīq Hasan Khān (d. 1890), although a Naqshbandī in his early life, not only criticized Sufi customs but also insisted that Sufism should be wholly private: Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, p. 274.

([38]) Arthur Buehler, 'Charismatic versus Scriptural Authority: Naqshbandi Response to Deniers of Mediational Sufism in British India', in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, (eds) F. De-Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden, 1999), pp. 477–8.

([39]) Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India*.

([40]) For a detailed discussion, see Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm*, (Urdu transl.) (Deoband, n.d.), ch. 2; although the practice of offering *nayaz* and reciting *fatiha* (the opening chapter of the Quran), often repeated over food on customary occasions and at graves, among other occasions, was considered valid in principle if performed in accordance with the Sharī'at, however, its critics believed that people had introduced their own imaginations and superstitions into it and its virtues had been lost.

([41]) Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet*, pp. 12, 181.

([42]) Wahhabism arose in the mid-eighteenth century through the propagation of the teachings of Muhammad b. 'Abdul Wahhāb (d. 1792) in the Najd region of the Arabian Peninsula. This was a utopian religio-political movement with a nihilistic view of Islamic culture and traditions and advocating a literal reading of Quran. At the core of his teachings were the twin concepts of *tauhid* and *shirk*. For details, see Esther Peskes' article on 'Wahhabiya' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1983).

([43]) Cited in W. C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, 1957), p. 56.

([44]) For more of this argument see Francis Robinson's works, particularly 'Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia', *Modern Asian Studies* 42, nos. 2–3 (2008), pp. 259–81; 'Religious Change and Self in Muslim South Asia since 1800', in his *Islam and Muslim History in South Asia*, pp. 105–21; and 'Other-worldly and This-worldly Islam and Islamic Revival', in his *Islam, South Asia, and the West*, pp. 171–88.

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([45]) These *fatwa*s reveal the hesitation of Muslims in accepting the new facts of life that were slowly emerging. Among frequently asked questions were: can prayers be offered in a moving train? Is India *dar-ul-harb* (abode of war)? Is English education permitted? Is it permitted to take allopathic medicines containing alcoholic ingredients? Is there anything objectionable from a religious point of view in smoking cigarettes and cigars? See K. A. Nizami, 'Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam (1763–1898)', in *Islamic Culture* 44, no. 3 (1970), p. 141.

([46]) These tensions are discussed in Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*, pp. 27–8.

([47]) Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, pp. 246–7.

([48]) For this argument, see Carl Ernst, 'Ideological and Technological Transformations of Contemporary Sufism', in *Muslim Networks: From Medieval Scholars to Modern Feminists* (eds) Miriam Cooke and Bruce Lawrence (New Delhi, 2005); see also Robinson, *Islam, South Asia and the West*. For the use of print by the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia, see Pearson, *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-Century India*, ch. 4.

([49]) Early in the nineteenth century, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, a Naqshbandī *shaikh* in Delhi, was enraged to hear that pictures of saints (evidently printed) were available at the Jami Masjid. Cited in Ernst, 'Ideological and Technological Transformations of Contemporary Sufism', in *Muslim Networks: From Hajj to Hip Hopp*, (eds) Miriam Cooke and Bruce Lawrence (Chapel Hill, 2005), pp. 191–207.

([50]) B. G. Martin's excellent study of nineteenth century Muslim brotherhoods in Africa provides valuable insight into the divergent attitudes of Sufis, some of whom emerged as militant resisters and ideologues, some taught mysticism, carried on jihad, and instituted social reforms, while others were little affected by the changing world: Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa*.

([51]) O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint*, p. 6.

([52]) However, as Jamil Abun Nasr points out, these movements suffered from the excessive rivalry among different African orders and thus failed to have a lasting impact. For instance, the jihad of 'Abdul Qādir against the French was opposed by the Tijani shaikhs who even entered into an alliance with the French in 1841. Likewise, the *shaikh*s of the Qādirī-Mukhtārī order and marabout families opposed the jihad of 'Umar bin Saʿīd, who was in fact killed in 1864 by the former's supporters. Moreover, the movement of 'Abdille Hasan aroused hostility from both the Qādirī and Ahmadī orders in Somalia. The discussion here owes much to the excellent analysis of these movements by Jamil M. Abun-Nasr,

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Muslim Communities of Grace: The Sufi Brotherhoods in Islamic Religious Life (London, 2007), pp. 202–18.

([53]) Abun-Nasr, *Muslim Communities of Grace*, p. 218.

([54]) Gilsenan, *Saint and Sufi in Modern Egypt*, p. 206. For a critique of his views, see Frederick De-Jong, *Turuq and Turuq-linked Institutions in Nineteenth Century Egypt* (Leiden, 1978).

([55]) O'Brien, *The Mourides of Senegal*. Founded by Amandu Bamba (d. 1927), its networks spread by appealing to peasant communities who were disturbed by colonial military campaigns. See Mamadou Diouf, 'The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitan', *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000), p. 682.

([56]) Berger, *Islam in Egypt Today*, pp. 62–89.

([57]) Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam*. Eickelman concludes that in spite of a marked decline in the power of individual marabouts, maraboutism remains for many 'a religion of everyday life'. It is also evident from Hoffman's study that, despite setbacks on different fronts, the message of Sufism continues to speak to modern times and has been adapted to modern social conditions. See Valerie Hoffman, *Sufism, Mystics and Saints in Modern Egypt* (South Carolina, 1995).

([58]) J. Johansen, *Sufism and Islamic Reform in Egypt* (New York, 1996).

([59]) Berger, *Islam in Egypt Today*, pp. 74–6.

([60]) Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Mystic and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (London, 1985), pp. 112–13.

([61]) Bruce Lawrence, 'Sufism and neo-Sufism', in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Muslims and Modernity*, (ed.) Robert W. Hefner, vol. 6 (New York, 2010), pp. 365–6. Serif Mardin explains how Turkish Sufis adjusted their practices and became involved in the transformative processes of modern times. His case study reveals how a nineteenth–twentieth century leader Bediuzzaman Said Nursi countered problems of Western intrusion in Muslim culture: Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany, 1989).

([62]) Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Mystic and Commissars*, p. 3.

([63]) Sarah Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 159.

([64]) Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849–1947* (Delhi, 1988), p. 24.

([65]) Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*, p. 261.

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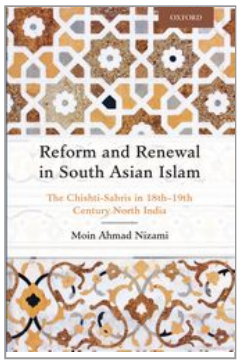
([66]) William Henry Sleeman, *A Journey Through the Kingdom of Oude in 1846–1850*, vol. 1 (London, 1858), pp. 232–4.

([67]) Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*, pp. 252–4, 258–63.

([68]) F. Lehmann, ‘The Sufi Khanqahs in Modern Bihar’, in *Islam in Asia*, (ed.) Y. Friedmann, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1984), p. 238.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Islamic Spirituality and the Chishtī-Sābrī Traditions

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Abstract and Keywords

This Chapter offers an overview of the origin and evolution of Sufism, its theoretical and practical manifestations and the institutionalization thereof in doctrines, schools and orders. It reviews the background of the main traditions of the Chishti-Sabri order, as they had grown from the fifteenth through to the seventeenth century. The order's earliest centre of activity was the Awadh region, which in pre-modern period, was a markedly pluralist and composite culture shaped by the deepened interaction between Hindu-Muslim mysticism and the spread into India of the speculative mysticism of Ibn Arabi. Influenced by such a milieu, the Sabri traditions retained throughout this period a firm belief in Ibn-Arabi's philosophy, influences from Bhakti and Vedantic practices, culturally assimilative tendencies, and performance of strenuous mystical exercises.

Keywords: Sufism, Ibn-Arabi, Chishti-Sabri, cultural assimilation, Vedantic mysticism, Abdul Quddus Gangohi, Shah Muhibbullah, medieval Awadh

Many orientalists working on Sufism were unable to see any intrinsic relation between it and Islam. Their writings, based on the outward behaviour of some Sūfī sects, implied a marked deviation from the central tenets of scriptural Islam.[1] The notion that Islam stands for harsh legalism while Sufism is indifferent to religious law has at times encouraged scholars to look for the sources of Sufism outside Islam, in terms of Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Greek influences.[2] However, the **(p.30)** alleged indifference of Sūfis to religious law and to Hadīs is unfounded and fails to recognize an important dimension of

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classical Sufism. For instance, scholars have ignored the contribution of Sūfīs to the development of Hadīs literature, which has generally been credited entirely to the religious scholars. They make nothing of the fact that several of the early Islamic mystics were the teachers of some of the most celebrated scholars of Hadīs. For instance, Junaid Baghdādī, known for his sobriety, earned the title of *tā'us-ul-'ulamā* ('Peacock of the Scholars') on account of his great respect for exoteric sciences. Other Sūfīs such as Abū 'Abdullāh Hakīm Tirmizī, Abū Muhammad Jurayrī, and Abū Hamza' Bazzāz stand out in the roll of Sūfīs as great scholars and *'ulamā*.

Sūfism (*tasawwuf* in Arabic) encompasses such a diversity of spiritual aspirations and experiences that it is difficult to assign one definition to it. Even the early theorists indicated different connotations for the term Sūfī.[3] Thus, as Carl Ernst points out, depending on the nature of experience and expertise a Sūfī is also referred to as *'ābid* (worshipper), *zāhid* (ascetic), *'ārif* (Gnostic), *sālik* (traveller), *muhibb* (lover), *majzūb* (intoxicated), *shaikh* or *murshid* (teacher or master), *walī* ('friend' [of God]), *qutb* or *ghaus* (based on spiritual status), and so on.[4] Based on its numerous connotations, *tasawwuf* is generally understood as that aspect of Islam which explores its spiritual dimensions. Islam is said to have an external **(p.31)** (*zāhirī*) and an internal (*bātinī*) dimension and Sufism is a spiritual quest for the inner truth and reality of the teachings of Islam, which, as the Sūfīs hold, can be best understood when experienced. It is insight into the manifestations of nature, religious rites, and beliefs, and finally into one's own soul, that is termed as *tasawwuf*.

However, this definition is only partial, since Sufism also incorporates several ethical aspirations, a constant struggle with oneself in order to develop good morals, and the endeavour to eliminate unworthy desires and cultivate an intense, passionate love for God (*'ishq-i-ilāhī*). This, as the Sūfīs suggest, can only be achieved if one's passions and the lower self (*nafs*) are annulled through continuous introspection and struggle against one's passions, which is called *jihād-i-akbar* (the greater jihad/struggle). This process of purification of one's lower self is called *tazkiyat-un-nafs*, and only by achieving it can a Sūfī reach the end of mystic discipline, which is *ma'rifat* (knowledge of God).[5]

Although much has been written about its sources, practitioners of Sufism who have theorized their practice have considered it an authentic expression of Islam and have spiritedly put forward the claim that the basis of their thought and belief lies in mystical interpretation of the Qur'ān or *ta'wīl*.[6] There were religious devout who in their spiritual hunger probed deeper into the meanings of Qur'ān. As a result, a number of technical terms of Sūfī practice were developed from Qur'ānic vocabulary. For instance, the central concept of the lower self or *nafs* (sometimes equated with the Biblical notion of 'the flesh') is found at different places in the Qur'ān: *nafs* is categorized as the 'soul commanding to evil' (*al-nafs-al-ammāra bi's-su*, 12:53), the 'blaming soul' (*al-nafs-al-lawwāma*, 75:2) and

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the ‘soul at peace’ (*al-nafs-al-mutma’inna*, 89: 27–30). Several cosmological **(p. 32)** themes in Sufism and its mystical psychology derive from the Qur’ān.[7] *Ma‘rifat*, the bedrock of Sūfī discipline, is also justified by quoting verses from Qur’ān which testify to the closeness between man and God.[8]

After the Qur’ān, the most authoritative texts for Muslims are the collections of Prophetic traditions (Hadīs), which the Sūfis claim to follow religiously.[9] In one of the earliest works on Sūfī concepts, *Kitāb-uz-zuhd*, the author ‘Abdullāh bin Mubārak of Merv (d. 797) tried to justify his own views on renunciation (*zuhd*) by citing Hadīs and evidences from the Prophet’s life. Similarly, al-Kharrāz (d. 899) tried to prove in his *Kitāb-us-sidq* that Sūfis strive to follow the kind of life that the Prophet led. A similar justification is also put forward in Abū Tālib al-Makkī’s (d. 996) *Quwwat-ul-qulūb* and in *Kitāb-ul-luma‘* of Abū Nasr Sarrāj (d. 988), where an entire chapter is devoted to ‘imitation of the Prophet’. In the *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, a Sūfī is advised to follow traditions even in the smallest details of daily life such as eating, travelling, and sleeping.[10] The Prophet’s withdrawal to Mt. Hira for meditation was seen by Sūfis as the basis of the practice of seclusion (*chilla*). The Ascension of the Prophet (*mi‘rāj*) is a source for the extensive visions recorded by Sūfis. Even the term used by Sūfis for successor (*khalīfah*) is the same term used for the successors of the Prophet, signifying how important the Prophetic model was for them. Indeed, ‘Muhammad was a Sūfī when on his way to be a prophet’, and Qur’ānic injunctions provide the basis for many of the ideas that Sufism imbibed or cultivated.[11] Thus, whatever the extraneous influences may **(p.33)** have been, Sufism always remained deeply embedded in the core Islamic scriptures.

Genesis and Development of Sufism

The seeds of Sufism can be traced in the devotional life of the Prophet and of his Companions such as al-Ghiffārī (d. 653), Uwais Qaranī (d. 657), and Salmān Fārsī (d. 653). But this was the time when, in the words of a classical Sūfī theorist ‘Alī Hujwerī (d. 1077), ‘Sufism was a reality without a name.’ Although the first to use the word ‘Sūfī’ in his name was Abū Hāshim al-Sūfī (d. 767), certain individuals of Kufa and Basra (in modern Iraq) started to show aversion to a materialistic approach to life and concentrated on disciplining their souls through *tauba* (repentance). Figures such as Hasan Basrī (d. 728) became the forefathers of Sufism and came to be respected by posterity for their simple lifestyle and devotion to worship. Their aversion was perhaps in part a response to the establishment of imperial monarchy and the growing pomp and glory of Islamic empire.

Much before the Sūfī movement entered South Asia, many of its key features and concepts had been developed elsewhere in the Islamic world. For instance, the dominant theme of cosmic emotion (‘*ishq-i-ilāhī*)[12] was developed by Rābia‘ Basrī (d. 801), a well-known woman mystic who introduced the concept of disinterested Love of God, that is, without hope of any reward or fear of eternal

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punishment.[13] This theme has ever since **(p.34)** remained dominant in Sufism and has been expressed most eloquently in the works of classical Sūfī theorists such as Hāris Muhāsibī (d. 857), who wrote his famous *Fasl-fi'l-muhabba*, and by Zun-Nūn Misrī (d. 860).[14]

Moreover, a kind of teacher–student relationship emerged with the formation of mystic 'schools' (*garoh*/*mazhab*) in the tenth century.[15] These groups, often named after a particular *shaikh*, led to the emergence of a separate Sūfī identity, and were precursors to the Sūfī orders. Some 'schools' were concerned with the metaphysical issues raised by mysticism, while others were devoted to self-discipline and social doctrines. This spiritual drive in Islam gradually turned into a mass movement. Around the same time, the need to make its followers and critics aware of its central teachings and mystic subtleties led to the composition of numerous Sūfī treatises. This move was also prompted by the persecution of mystics such as Mansūr Hallāj (d. 922), whose ecstatic utterances (*shathiyāt*) had fired up the externalist scholars ('*ulamā-i-zāhir*) against Sufism.[16] Mystic ideas which individual pious Sūfis had propounded were now crystallized into a consistent mystic philosophy, thanks to the efforts of its early scholars and theorists such as Imām Qushayrī (d. 1072) and 'Alī Hujwerī. Biographies (*tazkirah*s) were written on the lives of prominent teachers such as 'Abdul Rahmān Sulāmī's (d. 1021) *Tabaqāt-i-sūfiya*, and Hāfiz Abū Nu'aim's (d. 1038) *Hilyat-ul-auliyā'*. Sūfī manuals discussed mystic concepts and experiences: the different stages (*maqāmāt*) and states (*ahwāl*) in a Sūfī's spiritual journey were defined and established, although additions were made to them later on as well. Khwāja 'Abdullāh Ansārī's (d. 1088) *Manāzil-us-sā'irīn*, which later went through many commentaries, was considered an important treatise in this regard.

These developments were fully crystallized in the twelfth century. Imām Ghazālī (d. 1111), 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī (d. 1166), and Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī (d. 1145), preeminent figures in the spiritual movement in Islam, carried it to new heights. By combining in their lives and actions the divergent paths of *madrasah* and *khānqāh*, they exemplified the closeness **(p.35)** between the Sūfī and '*ālim* traditions of Islam. Their works made Sufism an inseparable part of Islam and secured the consensus of the community (*ijmā'*).[17] Around the same time, we also find the emergence of Sūfī orders or *silsilah*s, which became the main repositories and guardians of Sūfī teachings. The spiritual movement of Islam now became a more concrete social force, and individual devotion gave way to an organized institution and a definitive master–disciple relationship. In the words of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'the orders guaranteed the perpetuation of the teachings of Sufism, the continuity of initiation and initiatic transmission, and brought into being organisations that could protect the flame of Sufism in the storm of outward human life with all its vicissitudes.'[18] The orders were based on a definite set of rules of etiquette, litanies, forms of meditation, and so on. They also differed in their attitude towards politics and in their social appeal. Meticulous procedures of initiation (including oath of allegiance or *bai'at*,

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bestowal of a cloak or *khirqa*, and other such practice) were introduced, symbolizing different degrees of relationship with the teacher. Once the initiation procedure was complete the entrant started from the very basic stage of *sulūk*, namely repentance (*tauba*) and strict observance of religious rituals and supererogatory prayers, gradually climbing the 'ladder of *sulūk*' as he progressed.[19]

(p.36) As the Sūfī movement gathered momentum, lodges or hospices emerged (Arabic: *ribāt*, *zāwiya*; Persian: *khānqāh*, *jamā'at khāna*; Turkish: *tekke*) to provide it an organizational basis. These dwelling places were, in the words of K. A. Nizami, 'the nuclei for the expanding movement of Sufism and a forum for the discipline of the corporate life of the mystics'.[20] Manuals were written to explain the rules and regulations of *khānqāh*s, such as Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrawardī's '*Awārif-ul-ma'ārif*, which explained its organization, the principles of Sufism, and relations between a *shaikh* and his disciples, among other things. Abū Najīb Suhrawardī's (d. 1168) *Ādāb-ul-murīdīn* provided an exposition of the training and guidance of disciples. The Sūfī concept of *wilāyat*s (spiritual domains) divided the Muslim world into spiritual jurisdictions, within whose boundaries different Sūfī masters exercised their influence to invigorate the spiritual life of different sections of Muslim society.

(p.37) A Sūfī master or *shaikh* held the most important place in a Sūfī establishment. The importance of the master–disciple (*pīr-murīd*) relationship in Sufism cannot be overstated. It was both personal and spiritual. The influence of a master went a long way in determining the thought and character of the student. The master was responsible for the upbringing (*tarbiyat*) of the student and for guiding him along the mystic path (*sulūk*). *Shaikh*s of long standing were able to understand the psychology of their disciples and detect their hidden defects. The master was believed to be an exemplar of piety and learning, complete obedience to him was therefore crucial and understood psychologically as an act of renunciation of the lower self (*nafs*). His disciples looked at him for guidance in all matters.[21] The training of disciples was the master's primary concern within the order. It demanded a great deal of psychological expertise to recognize the different talents and characters of his *murīd*s and train them accordingly. Those disciples who showed great commitment to the mystic discipline were chosen as the *khalīfāh*s or spiritual successors, and on them was placed the onus of expanding and perpetuating the order.

It was an unquestionable prerogative of the Sūfī master to decide where his *silsilah* should spread and through whom. It is difficult to ascertain the motives behind the selection of a particular place where the *shaikh* felt his deputies should settle. According to mystic writings, intuition or an unveiling of divine guidance (*kashf*, *ilhām*) was a determining factor in most cases. Sometimes a disciple was sent to his native town, where he had local roots or from where he had come to seek training at the first instance. Presence of a substantial Muslim

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population in a particular city also provided an incentive, while in other cases it was the desire to spread the 'Word of God' (*kalimāt-ul-haq*) which prompted a **(p.38)** *shaikh* to send his deputies to a non-Muslim populated area. However, proselytizing zeal should not be read into such cases because Sūfis never acted as missionaries, nor was such an undertaking made at the time of granting discipleship.[22]

By the time the spiritual movement reached the subcontinent, it had come a long way from an individual's private quest for spiritual solace to an organized movement of initiating disciples, their intensive training, a community life at *khānqāh*s, and well-established and defined *silsilah*s. Although there were many major and minor orders which came to the subcontinent, for our purposes, it was the Chishtī order that remains significant. Its first known centre during the early thirteenth century was the town of Ajmer in Rajasthan but it soon spread to the Punjab, Delhi, and, within the span of a century, Chishtī *khānqāh*s had sprung up in Gujarat, the Deccan, Malwa, and Bengal.[23] Their rapid expansion can be explained in part by the ethical and moral teachings of their *shaikh*s. With concepts such as *khidmat-i-khalq* ('service to humanity'), they inculcated sympathy for people of other faiths and in the history of this order a spirit of co-existence has accordingly dominated in dealings with **(p.39)** non-Muslims.[24] This framework allowed the Chishtīs to enter into a meaningful dialogue with Hindu ascetics, and it is not surprising therefore that in the entire corpus of Muslim literature, it is in the Chishtī mystic records that we find the first use of Hindawi (a generic term for indigenous dialects of northern India).[25] The use of Hindawi and local dialects (especially by Bābā Farīd and later by Shaikh 'Abdul Quddūs) made a distinctive contribution to bridging the gulf between Hindu and Muslim mystic traditions. Moreover, their nonchalant and indifferent attitude towards political machinations won them support by dispelling mistrust. Chishtī *khānqāh*s were meeting places open equally to the rich and to the poor, to the educated and illiterate, to travellers, mendicants, and dervishes, in fact to anyone who came in search of spiritual solace. Their *langar*s (free kitchens) provided meals to the hungry without ostentatious gestures of charity: 'first greet, then eat, then talk' was the rule of their *khānqāh*s.[26]

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the order remained so firmly rooted in the Indian subcontinent that new emerging orders like the Naqshbandī, Qādirī, and Shattārī failed to undermine its importance. New Chishtī centres emerged at Thanesar, Rajabpur, Amroha, Jaunpur, Manikpur, Gwalior, Gangoh, Panipat, and in other smaller towns around Delhi.[27]

The Chishtī-Sābrī Identity and Traditions (Fifteenth–Seventeenth Century)

The Chishtī-Sābrī *Shajra*

A *shajra* (chain of initiations) gave a Sūfī order a source of legitimacy by guaranteeing the transmission of mystical knowledge acquired by the **(p.40)** founders to future generations. The founder of each *silsilah* was linked by a

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chain of initiations to his spiritual masters, eventually linking him to the Prophet through Caliphs ʻAlī or Abū Bakr.[28] It was most important that the chain of initiations should remain intact to justify an unbroken connection to its earliest generations. These chains were written down, recited, and even memorized, and were considered a means of receiving the blessings (*baraka*) of the spiritual masters and of those linked to him. The Prophetic saying, ʻThe best people are those living in my generation, and then those who will follow them, and then those who will follow the latter',[29] provided ample justification for connecting oneself with the earliest generation. The closer someone replicated the lifestyle of the Muslims of this period, the more devout a religious figure he was considered to be. Sūfī *shajra*s served this purpose by connecting to the earliest generation and to the Prophet, who was considered the fountainhead of all mystical knowledge.

In the case of the Chishtī-Sābrī leadership, it is unfortunate that any attempt to study their earliest history is hindered by paucity of authentic source materials. Not much is known about the earliest names in their *shajra*. It appears that the early leaders were based in rural locales and stayed away from royal courts or even public life. The founding figure of the Sābrī branch was ʻAlā-ud-din ʻAlī Sābir (d. *ca.* 1291) of Kalyer (a small town near Roorkee). Contemporary *tazkirah*s and hagiographical accounts are silent about him. All we know for certain is that he was a *khalīfah* of Bābā Farīd and had received his early training at the Chishtī *khānqāh* in Ajodhan.[30] However, seventeenth century sources provide surprisingly detailed information about him and his immediate spiritual successors.[31] Of course, **(p.41)** their historicity is doubtful. Most of the information is either based on *kashf* (intuition, divine disclosure) or oral traditions. Many nineteenth-century *tazkirah* writers have copied uncritically from these sources and also from apocryphal works to present amazing, impossible anecdotes about ʻAlā-ud-dīn ʻAlī Sābir.[32]

The kind of anecdotes attributed to Shaikh ʻAlā-ud-dīn by his later biographers are full of ʻsaintly-wrath' and vindictive anger, a feature quite commonly attributed to the early generation of Sābrī *shaikh*s. For instance, one incident recorded in later sources tells of a mosque in Kalyer being razed to the ground by an angry glance of the Shaikh, killing the inmates who had refused to accept him. This illustrates the enormity of ʻsaintly wrath', and goes against our understanding of Chishtī norms and attitudes. So dreadful was the impression left on the people, assert the *tazkirah* writers, that even after his death no one dared to visit his grave until one of his descendants, Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs of Gangoh (d. 1537), miraculously secured his permission for people visiting his shrine to receive *baraka* (blessing). Such harrowing accounts may be put down to the understandable zeal of the *tazkirah* authors, who were in most cases spiritually connected to him. They were interested in miraculous stories and gave full vent to their imaginations in elaborating them. Their works tend to create the impression that these Sūfī *shaikh*s were endowed with miraculous

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powers and able to defeat the spiritual powers of their **(p.42)** competitors or challengers. A modern historian, Riazul Islam, explains the reason for the circulation of such stories:

> saintly wrath stories made Sufic writings popular among a large section of readers, and the popularity of wrath stories induced Sufic writers to add to the quantum of such stuff in their writings … These stories brought a bonus to the Sufis in general by inspiring fear and caution against doing, or even thinking to do anything … disrespectful to the Shaikhs.[33]

The accounts of two more generations after ʻAlā-ud-din ʻAlī Sābir (Shams-ud-dīn Turk[34] and Jalal-ud-dīn[35] at Panipat) remain little known. It is from Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq (d. 1434), that a clearer picture of the order begins to emerge. Rudauli (in the Barabanki district near Lucknow), where Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq settled and which remained a focal point of Sābrī activity for nearly a century, is the earliest centre that can be studied in the light of historical data. His *malfūzāt* (table-talk) *Anwār-ul-ʻuyūn*, compiled by Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs, constitutes the first authentic source of information on the early development of the order.[36] Shaikh **(p.43)** ʻAbdul Haq founded his *khānqāh* at a time when the Chishtī *khānqāh*s had already spread to various regions in the subcontinent and he had himself been a visitor to many of them. After completing his training at Panipat under Jalāl-ud-dīn Pānipatī, he first moved to Sunam, but following its devastation at the hands of Tīmūr during the closing years of the fourteenth century, he left for Bengal. Later, he settled in Rudauli.[37] Even the accounts of ʻAbdul Haq are full of ecstatic moments and splendour of wrath and lack elements of sympathy, benignity, and sensitivity (*dard*) towards people, a distinctive element in the teachings of early Chishtī Sūfīs.[38]

It was his successor Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī (d. 1537), who played a leading role in securing a firm base for the order.[39] Together with *Anwār-ul-ʻuyūn*, his own *malfūzāt*, compiled by his son Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn and titled *Latāʼif-i-quddūsī*, form the earliest authentic sources of the Sābrī order. Born at Rudauli into a family with a distinguished record of providing scholars of traditional Islamic sciences, ʻAbdul Quddūs was attracted early on to mysticism. He joined the local *khānqāh* of ʻAbdul Haq, then headed by his grandson Shaikh Muhammad bin ʻĀrif.[40] It was at Rudauli that ʻAbdul Quddūs received his mystic training. Through his initial training at Rudauli he imbibed the culturally assimilative trends of the region, a tendency sustained in the Chishtī-Sābrī order for **(p.44)** another two centuries. He took great interest in Vedantic philosophy and Nath Panthi practices, besides being a diehard follower of Ibn ʻArabī's doctrines. Also, he was the first Sūfī *shaikh* of the order who sought to influence the nobles and rulers of his time. Prior to him, the Sābrīs hardly intervened in political matters. It seems that the political upheavals in the region, which had compelled him to leave his hometown and migrate to Shahabad, constrained him to write to those who held political power.[41] His letters, addressed to Sultān

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Sikandar Lodī (r. 1489–1517) and his nobles, to Mughal emperors Bābur (r. 1526–30) and Humāyūn (r. 1530–40, 1555–6), and some Mughal nobles, contain moral exhortation and reminders of the royal obligation to support men of learning and religious classes (*arbāb-i-ʻilm-o-maʻrifat*).[42]

His successor Shaikh Jalāl-ud-dīn Thānesarī (d. 1582) was by occupation a *muftī* before his interest in mysticism overcame him.[43] Like his predecessors, he developed interest in ecstasy and *samāʻ* involving *raqs* (rhythmic movement).[44] In his work *Irshād-ut-tālibīn*, which was to serve as a guide to mystics, he advised them to perform *zikr* (remembrance of God by reiteration of different formulae) and various practices of breath control (*pās-i-anfās*).[45] His son-in-law and spiritual successor Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Balkhī (d. 1626) was an accomplished scholar and a teacher of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and sought to prove its legitimacy by writing a commentary on certain chapters of the Qur'ān.[46] Under him, the *silsilah* **(p.45)** spread beyond the boundaries of the Mughal Empire. The opportunity came when Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn was banished to Mecca in 1606 for his alleged support to Prince Khusrau.[47] His long sojourn in Balkh provided a new environment to spread his teachings. The Uzbek ruler, Imām Qulī Khān, reportedly became his disciple and his ardent defender in the face of opposition from the 'ulamā, who were agitated at the introduction of the Chishtī form of *samāʻ*. Through his efforts the order spread in Lahore and in Kashmir and the north-west region.[48]

Nizām-ud-dīn's *khalīfah* Shaikh Abū Saʻīd of Gangoh (d. 1639–40) continued the Sābrī order in the subcontinent. His deputies spread in two different areas: through Muhammad Sādiq (d. 1648–9) in the Delhi-Saharanpur region,[49] and through Shāh Muhibbullāh (d. 1648) in the Awadh region.

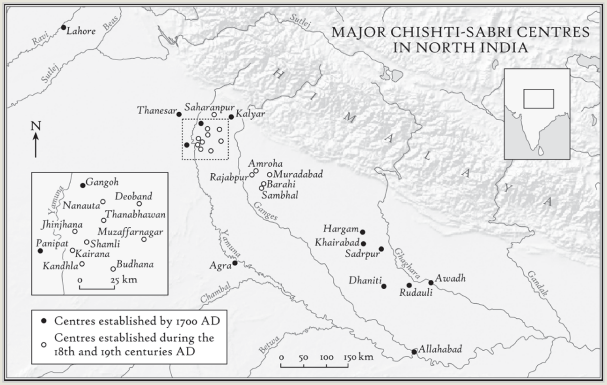
For our purposes, the branch of Shāh Muhibbullāh is more significant. Born in Sadrpur, a village near Khairabad, he was a descendant of Bābā Farīd. After a few initial journeys taken for formal education and employment, his interest in mysticism began to grow. Once, while meditating at the shrine of Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in Delhi, he was divinely guided to Gangoh, where the Sābrī *khānqāh* was flourishing under Shaikh Abū **(p.46)** **(p.47)** Saʻīd. Under his guidance, he swiftly travelled the mystic path, at times arousing the jealousy of other fellow disciples.[50] After finishing his training at Gangoh, he was given the *wilāyat* of Allahabad, which remained his abode for the rest of his life.

Thus, over a period of some three centuries, Chishtī-Sābrī *khānqāh*s spread over much of the Doab–Awadh region, its important centres being Kalyer, Rudauli, Gangoh, Allahabad, Thanesar, and Panipat. From the descriptions in the early *tazkirah* accounts we may point out some characteristic traits of the Sābrī *shaikh*s. These include an interest in *samāʻ*, *zikr*, involvement in intensive mystic training, *mujāhidāt* (spiritual exertions) and *riyāzāt* (strenuous mystical exercises), occurrence of ecstatic moments, and the traits of *jalāl* (awe) in their

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nature; none of which, however, appear to have hindered their performance of obligatory prayers. Thus, our sources assert that whenever the time of prayer came, 'Abdul Quddūs' disciples used to pull him out of ecstasy by calling out '*haq haq*' (Truth). From an ideological viewpoint, the early Chishtī-Sābrīs were known for their unflinching support of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and their interest in Hindu philosophy and metaphysics. Their belief in the concept of universality of revelation and in *wahdat-ul-wujūd* enabled them to approach other faiths sympathetically and create ideological bridges with the higher Hindu thought. These traditions, some of which are discussed below, formed the cornerstone of medieval Sābrī traditions.

Speculative Mysticism of Ibn 'Arabī



Map 1.1 Major Chishtī-Sābrī Centres in North India

Source: Based on Akram Baraswi, *Iqtibas-ul-anwar*; Ghulam Sarwar, *Khazinat-ul-asfiya*; and K. A. Nizami, *Tarikh-i-mashaikh-i-Chisht*, vols. 1 and 5. Cartography by Alexander J. Kent.

Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240) has been one of the most influential authors on Sufism who gave full expression to various metaphysical and cosmological doctrines and provided a thorough explanation of the inner meanings of matters merely alluded to by his predecessors.[51] His grand synthesis of the ideas of pre-Islamic Philo, Stoics, and Neo-Platonists with the mystical philosophies of Hallāj, Hakīm Tirmizī, Bāyazīd Bustāmī, Ibn Masarrah, Ibn Sīna, and Ghazālī gave him a lasting influence. The two works which **(p.48)** comprise the essence of his writings are the *Futūhāt-ul-makkiya* and the *Fusūs-ul-hikam*. These became the source-books for generations of Sūfīs, and dealt with all the core doctrines and cosmological themes of Sufism, deeper meanings of Islamic rituals, states and stations of the mystic path, esoteric dimensions of the meanings of the Qur'ān and Hadīs, and so forth. It was also in these works that the concept of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* or *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* was set out and elaborated.[52]

This doctrine, as propounded by Ibn 'Arabī and explained by his disciples, claims a Transcendent Unity of Being summed up in the maxim *hama-ūst* ('All is He'). It means that God, while completely transcendent with respect to His creation, is also not completely separated from it, rather, He is manifested in whatever exists in the universe. A modern scholar, Abdul Haq Ansari, has summarized the doctrine in four basic postulates: a) There is one Being only, God, Who exists in

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each and every **(p.49)** object of the world without suffering any kind of division or variation; b) all the attributes predicated to Him are relational predicates that accrue to Him in relation to His determinate forms; c) the bearer of all the attributes, the agent of all the acts, and the subject of all experiences that any object does or has is God in that object; d) the objects of the world, in spite of their substantial oneness with God, are formally different from Him with a difference that is everlasting.[53]

It was through the Suhrawardī order and the writings of Fakhr-ud-dīn ʻIrāqī (d. 1289) and ʻAbdul Rahmān Jāmī (d. 1492) that Ibn ʻArabī's ideas entered the subcontinent. Shaikh Bahā-ud-dīn Zakariya (d. 1267), the founder of the Suhrawardī order in India, was well acquainted with ʻIrāqī. Ibn Arabī's thoughts were explained in a letter of ʻIrāqī to Shaikh Sadr-ud-dīn ʻĀrif (d. 1286), a successor of Bahā-ud-dīn Zakariya.[54] However, as Bruce Lawrence notes, till about 1350, the Chishtī order seems to have been insulated from mainstream speculative mysticism: their writings do not contain any efforts to create theological systems; they were more concerned with basic concepts of Sufism, correct behaviour, reverence for *shaikh*s, and social ethics.[55]

The latter half of the fourteenth century attests to the presence of Ibn ʻArabī's ideas with *wahdat-ul-wujūd* becoming a concern in many writings. During the reign of Sultān Firoz Shāh Tughlaq (r. 1351–88), the *Fusūs* was taught in his *madrasah* and his contemporary Masʻūd Bak (d. 1397) preached *wujūdī* ideas with great exuberance.[56] Shaikh Sharf-ud-dīn **(p.50)** Manerī (d. 1381), a Firdausī Sūfī in Bihar, was deeply impressed by *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and drew on the expressions of it in the works of Farīd-ud-dīn ʻAttār (d. 1221), ʻIrāqī, and Rūmī. Another major conduit of Ibn ʻArabī's influence in India was Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī (d. c.1436). Originally from Simnan, he studied at Kashan under ʻAbdul Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 1329), a *Fusūs* commentator, and later moved to Jaunpur. He wrote to acquaint the mystics of the true meaning of technical terms and his *malfūzāt* sought to reconcile Ibn ʻArabī's ideas with orthodoxy. By the end of the fourteenth century speculative mysticism was well-entrenched in Indo–Muslim Sufism and was being discussed and critiqued by Sūfīs and *ʻulamā* alike.

Voices against the views of Ibn ʻArabī were raised first in Persia and then in South Asia. Although Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1327) was an early critic, the most effective refutation came from his contemporary, Shaikh ʻAlā-ud-daula Simnānī (d. 1336). Simnānī understood the concept of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* as unacceptable since it confounded God with the world and lessened the distinction between the Creator and the creation. In a letter to ʻAbdul Razzāq Kāshānī, he claimed that the goal of the mystic path, which the *wujūdī*s claim, is in reality only the initial stages in the journey. He launched a tirade against *wujūdī* beliefs and his disciples travelled throughout Persia and into India, where they visited leading *khānqāh*s in a bid to divert Indian Sūfīs away from *wujūdī* beliefs. His views

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found a supporter in Saiyid Muhammad Gesū Darāz (d. 1422), a disciple of Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh of Delhi. In his Persian treatises, he waged an unremitting war to undermine the influence of Ibn ʻArabī and condemned the works of ʻAttār and Rūmī. In the early seventeenth century, Simnānī's position was taken up by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624), one of the most influential leaders of the Naqshbandī order in South Asia.[57]

(p.51) Sirhindī argued that *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* is not the *tauhīd* of the prophets of Islam, which is based on duality rather than identity of God and the world.[58] His other objection was that by identifying God with the world, this philosophy justifies idolatry, for if everything is the manifestation of God, its worship may well be justified.[59] As such, he propounded his own doctrine of *wahdat-ush-shuhūd* (*tauhīd-i-shuhūdī*).[60] Although he allowed *wahdat-ul-wujūd* a place in a mystic's spiritual journey, he refused to recognize it as the highest point. Like Simnānī, he upheld that the vision of identity is only at the initial stage of the spiritual journey and the final destination, which he called the stage of *wahdat-ush-shuhūd*, is where a Sūfī realizes that man is nothing more than a servant of God and that He is absolutely other and different from the world (*hama-az-ūst*, Everything is from Him). God is different in the sense that the world is a lower order of being; it is a shadow being (*wujūd-i-zillī*) while God is the real Being (*wujūd-i-aslī*).[61]

Despite such staunch opposition and the polemics against the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, its popularity continued to grow, with a veritable flood of commentaries on Ibn ʻArabī's works in medieval India. These commentaries informed the dominant strains of thought in South Asia, and the Chishtī-Sābrī order in particular produced some of the doctrine's ablest defenders. The ideas of Ibn ʻArabī reached the Sābrī *khānqāh* of Rudauli around the mid-fifteenth century. It is mentioned that when ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī was received at the *khānqāh* of Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq, the *Diwān* of Masʻūd Bak (a vociferous propagator of *wujūdī* ideas) **(p.52)** was being read.[62] Throughout his life, ʻAbdul Quddūs remained a vigorous advocate of *wujūdī* doctrine and his *Rushd nāmah* constantly returns to it. His initial training at Rudauli left an enduring mark on his mystic thought and the *Rushd nāmah*, written during those early years, portrays the mystic environment prevalent at that time in Rudauli and its environs. He is said to have written a commentary (*sharh*) on the *Fusūs*, which no longer exists. In the preface to his work *Nūr-ul-maʻānī*, he discussed *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, which brought him into controversy with the theologian from Multān, Mīrān Saiyidī Ahmad, with whom he debated 'for five or six months', until the theologian was persuaded to accept the validity of his argument.[63] In another of his works, titled *Qurrat-ul-ʻuyūn*, he talked about *wahdat-ul-wujūd* in detail.[64] He was so obsessed with the doctrine that when his own sons questioned it, he left Gangoh to stay with one of his disciples.[65] In *Rushd nāmah*, he strictly advises disciples to perform *samāʻ*, *salāt-i-maʻkūs* (a Sūfī ritual, involving praying while suspended upside down by a rope), and to believe in *wahdat-ul-wujūd.* He was so

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fond of *samā'* and *raqs* that he even debated the issue with a *muhtasib* (Censor of Public Morals) of Sultān Sikandar Lodī (r. 1489–1517).[66] 'Abdul Quddūs' letters to his successor Jalāl-ud-dīn Thānesarī also contain explanations of the subtleties of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*.[67]A remark in another of his letters, that 'Had the idol worshippers been able to know the truth about the idol, they would not have been misled', hints at his faith in *wujūdī* beliefs.[68]

Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Balkhī, following the Chishtī traditions, was also an accomplished scholar and teacher of *wujūdī* ideas who deliberated the true purport of the doctrine with Khwāja Bāqī Billāh (d. 1603), **(p.53)** founder of the Naqshbandī order in India.[69] Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī resumed this dialogue with Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn, and asserted in his letters the superiority of his own concept of *wahdat-ush-shuhūd*.[70] In one letter, he discussed the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and claimed that the views expressed by *wujūdī* Sūfīs were part of the realm of mystical intoxication (*sukr*) and based on initial mystical intuition only.[71] Although the response of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn is not known, we can infer that the ideas of Ibn 'Arabī were well-received by the Chishtī-Sābrīs and brought them into debates as to their true purport.

After 'Abdul Quddūs, the best defender of *wujūdī* ideas was Shāh Muhibbullāh, who lived in an age marked by increasing conflict between the two camps. Following the criticism offered by Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, the '*ulamā* remained distressed with the popularity of Ibn 'Arabī's ideas, which to them appeared clearly pantheistic. Besides the Chishtī-Sābrīs, the Qādirīs, such as Miān Mīr (d. 1635) and Mullā Shāh (d. 1661), were given to strong *wujūdī* ideas, and under their influence Prince Dārā Shikoh attempted to bring out the 'hidden Divine Truth' in other religions and laid emphasis on the acquisition of mystic knowledge of other faiths, particularly of Hinduism. For this he had to pay with his life. For any follower of Ibn 'Arabī, the atmosphere was far from congenial. It was in such a milieu that Shāh Muhibbullāh surpassed all others in his strong defence of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine. He undertook the difficult task of presenting the correct import of the *wujūdī* philosophy in the light of Qur'ān and Hadīs.

Shāh Muhibbullāh was well-versed in the *Fusūs* and *Futūhāt* and based his own writings on them. His own works, both in Arabic and Persian, contain an effective exposition of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* on the basis **(p.54)** of metaphysical speculation and spiritual experience. His intellectual interpretation of Ibn 'Arabī's mystical philosophy earned him the title of '*Shaikh-i-kabīr*' (while Ibn 'Arabī was called *shaikh-i-akbar*).[72] His interest in *wujūdī* philosophy had been kindled at the Sābrī *khānqāh* and led him to write an Arabic commentary on *Fusūs* (*Tajalliyāt-ul-Fusūs*)[73] before he moved to Allahabad, where he later rendered it into Persian in 1631.[74] His *Tarjumat-ul-Kitāb*[75] is an Arabic commentary on the Qur'ān, but from a *wujūdī* point of view, and it was soon followed by a commentary on his own work under the title *Hāshiya tarjumat-ul-Kitāb*.[76] Being a prolific writer, he laboured to clarify the *wujūdī* philosophy,

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assured that a proper study of Ibn ʻArabī's works would only make one more firm in the observance of religious law. In order to explain the teachings of Ibn ʻArabī to his disciples, he wrote a Persian work, *Ghayāt-ul-ghāwāt*.[77] In it he quotes extensively from the *Futūhāt* and *Fusūs* and maintains that a true mystic must remain within the boundaries of the Sharīʻat and act in accordance with Qur'ān and Sunnat.[78] Nearly all his works bear the stamp of *wujūdī* ideas and show him as their vigorous defender and passionate follower. In 1640, he wrote *Manāzir-i-akhass-ul-khawās*[79] in Persian. It is largely drawn from *Futūhāt* and concerned with stations and methods of practice. Perhaps no other work of Shāh Muhibbullāh created so much consternation as his Arabic work *Taswiya*, in which he discussed the *wujūdī* **(p.55)** philosophy of Ibn ʻArabī.[80] Having an idea of the controversial contents of the work, he advised his disciples to circulate it only among themselves.[81] Later on, Aurangzeb took serious exception to some of its contents and sought an explanation.[82]

Besides this significant literary output supporting the claims of *wujūdī* doctrines, Shāh Muhibbullāh's letter collection has eighteen long letters written to Sūfīs and *ʻulamā*, in which he interprets *wahdat-ul-wujūd*.[83] His erudition in the metaphysical teachings of Ibn ʻArabī attracted Prince Dārā Shikoh to him.[84] When the latter became governor of the *subah* of Allahabad in 1645, he began a series of letters, in which he put various controversial and difficult questions on *wahdat-ul-wujūd* to Shāh Muhibbullāh.[85]

Shāh Muhibbullāh's admiration for Ibn ʻArabī's doctrines landed him and his successors in trouble. During his lifetime, he had to face strong opposition from scholars, the most eminent being Mullā Mahmūd, a leading philosopher of the medieval cultural centre of **(p.56)** Jaunpur.[86] Muhibbullāh tried to counter his attacks by trying to convince him of the limitations of human intellect and reason and emphasizing that the secrets of Divine knowledge are beyond the comprehension of reason.[87] The *ʻulamā* of Allahabad tried their best to have a *fatwā* endorsed by Shaikh ʻAbdul Rashīd of Jaunpur (d. 1672),[88] claiming that both Shāh Muhibbullāh and his disciples were unbelievers, but the Shaikh refused to oblige. A contemporary of Shāh Muhibbullāh comments on the misunderstandings surrounding the Shāh's mystic leanings in this way:

> Even today the Shaikh [Shāh Muhibbullāh] is not free from the clutches of stupid and presumptuous persons. The stupid consider themselves to be his disciples and attribute atheistic ideas to him. In fact they are in error and have given up the right path, while the presumptuous accuse him of unbelief and deviation from Islam and call him the founder of heretical doctrines.[89]

Mughal historian Shāhnawāz Khān, writing in the eighteenth century, admits: 'In his [Shāh Muhibbullāh's] period till this time, his enemies having abused him [with accusations] of atheism and heresy, raised a hue and cry against him.'[90]

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Even with such opposition, the stance of Shāh Muhibbullāh was far from defensive. If he defended the doctrines of Ibn ʻArabī, he criticized his opponents as *sūfiya-i-jāhil* or 'ignorant Sūfīs'.[91] Though Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī is not mentioned in his letters, his criticism was levelled against ʻAlā-ud-daula Simnānī and Saiyid Gesū Darāz, whom he believed to have **(p.57)** misunderstood the true purport of Ibn ʻArabī's philosophy.[92] He bitterly criticized those commentators of *Fusūs* and of Ibn ʻArabī's other writings who did not adhere to the original and failed to grasp the true spirit of his teachings.[93] He persistently highlighted the rational and philosophical dimensions of Ibn ʻArabī's writings and often quoted Ibn ʻArabī to support his case. Several centuries after his death, the efforts of Shāh Muhibbullāh were appreciated by an *ʻālim* of Firangi Mahal, Maulānā ʻAbdul Bārī (d. 1926), who praised him, saying that he had promoted a middle path between the two extremes—between those who completely rejected *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and those who were immersed in it in such a way that they paid no attention to Sharīʻat.[94]

Cultural Assimilation and the Chishtī-Sābrī Leadership

The Chishtī-Sābrī leadership of medieval Awadh worked towards a cultural assimilation that was primarily the outcome of their belief in *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, their concept of the universality of religion, and the general religious ethos of the region.

Chishtī thought was based on the belief that the urge to build intimate contact with God cannot be restricted to any particular group, creed, or faith. With this belief, the Chishtīs were able to appreciate the higher religious thought of various religions and worked towards achieving an emotional integration with non-Muslims. Indeed, the earliest Chishtī accounts do not pay as much importance to speculative discussions as they do to correct modes of behaviour and to ethical issues. Their approach towards people of other faiths had its roots in the mystic concept of God. The concept of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, which provided the ideological support to the *silsilah*, also helped to create social alignments. Their attitude towards other faiths grew out of the basic metaphysical postulate adumbrated in this doctrine. A broad concept of unity enabled the *wujūdī* followers to rise above the narrow and parochial divisions of society and strive to find a unity in heterogeneity. Translating these spiritual ideals **(p.58)** into practice, the *wujūdī*s were willing to see elements of truth in other religious faiths and practices. By seeing everything as a manifestation of God, the supporters of this doctrine were able to maintain a sympathetic attitude towards the non-Muslim population and create a religious accord with the local population.

Although *wujūdī* elements may have helped in strengthening aspirations to a universal society, they were not the only reason behind such an approach. *Wahdat-ul-wujūd* had only provided an incentive for religious integration, but it was the 'emotional integration' for which the Chishtīs were famous. Even before

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the advent of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas and their acceptance in Chishtī circles, their early leaders had devised revolutionary concepts of *itā‘at* (devotion to God) which identified religion with service to humanity. Although a Sūfī’s heart was to be always focused on God, the Chishtīs believed that true love for God is not complete if one does not love His creatures. The ‘brotherhood of man’ was central to their belief and from it emanated the entire structure of their thought and the pattern of their behaviour. Shaikh ‘Abdul Quddūs had once admonished his disciples in a letter saying:

> Why this meaningless talk about the believer,
> The *kāfir*, the obedient, the sinner,
> The rightly-guided, the misdirected, the Muslim,
> The pious, the infidel, the fire-worshipper?
> All are like beads in a rosary.[95]

This emotional integration was achieved through mystic songs, community living in *khānqāh*s, and a willingness to study mystic traditions in other faiths. Language was no barrier for the Chishtīs. The discussions at the hospice of Bābā Farīd were of equal interest to visiting yogis. From the thirteenth century onwards, Hindu mystical songs were sung in *samā‘* and Hindawi music was popular at many Sūfī centres. Bābā Farīd was known to write *dohās* in Hindawi while another Chishtī Sūfī, Saiyid Gesū Darāz, though a critic of *wujūdī* doctrine, felt that Hindawi was an ideal language for expressing esoteric ideas, and Hindawi music was subtle, elegant, and penetrated deep into the heart.[96]

(p.59) Besides *wahdat-ul-wujūd* (which provided the intellectual platform) and their understanding of ‘Unity of God’ and ‘brotherhood of man’ (which gave emotional support to their efforts), the concept of a universal divine revelation to mankind further paved the way for contact with people of different confessions. Religious scholars see Islam as the culmination of a universal message which has been sent down throughout history, in different languages, to different communities and through different messengers. The multiplicity of races, nations, and tribes necessitates a diversity of revelations.[97] The Prophet Muhammad has been mentioned as *khātim-un-nabīyyīn* (‘Seal of the Prophets’) in the Qur’ān, signifying the completion of revelations to mankind with him. For Muslims the Prophet’s message was thus conclusive but not exclusive.

While the *‘ulamā* had concerned themselves with this final revelation alone, the Sūfīs and particularly the Chishtīs looked for the unity of the inner contents of all religions. They believed that the adherents of all religions possessed the capability to seek the hidden truths within them and thus the seeds of mysticism were there in all faiths. Their attempt to study specific details of other religions was intended as a quest for this universal truth. The religious diversity in India provided Chishtīs with **(p.60)** a conducive environment for the search for universal meanings in the outer structures of other faiths.

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This view prevailed throughout the history of the Chishtī *silsilah*. Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325), the famous poet and disciple of Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā', reflected this understanding when he wrote:

> Though the Hindu is not a believer like me,
> He nevertheless believes in many things in which we believe.[98]

And,

> O You who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu,
> Learn also from him how worship is done.[99]

Similarly, 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī considered certain practices of yogis and ascetics as not contrary to his understanding of Islam, and he is reported to have once said:

> The manner in which certain unbelieving yogis, who have not a trace of Islam in them, relate knowledge of spiritual matters and of Divine Unity [*'ilm-i-ma'rifat-o-wahdat*] and the way in which they gain control of their breath and display miracles is not hid from the wise: but do you not see how Pharaoh also—curses be upon him!—as he was possessed of supernatural powers claimed divinity?[100]

When Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn compiled a commentary on *Rushd nāmah*, he justified his father's support of yogic exercises by quoting Qur'ānic verses and Hadīs to the effect that Indian religions were also based on *tauhīd* and prophetic messages which have become distorted over time but might contain the essence of Reality.[101] Another Chishtī-Sābrī, and a contemporary of Shāh Muhibbullāh, Shaikh 'Abdul Rahmān Chishtī (d. 1683), also believed that gnostics existed in the pre-Muhammadan **(p.61)** period and may have received divine revelations. Accordingly, he advised Sūfīs to select virtues from all religious communities.[102] Likewise, Shāh Kalīmullāh, an eighteenth-century Chishtī master, claimed that yogic practices like '*habs-i-nafs*' (regulation of breath), adopted by the mystics of India, had actually first been taught by Khizr to Khwāja 'Abdul Khāliq Ghajdawānī (d. 1179) in Bukhara.[103]

Another major factor in determining the outlook of the Chishtī-Sābrī order was the religious ethos of medieval Awadh. Medieval Awadh welcomed the ideology of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* which, as Muzaffar Alam suggests, was nourished and sustained by the political necessities of the rulers.[104] Vaishnavite themes, Bhakti ideas, and Vedantic philosophy, together with yogic exercises, were extremely popular in the region. There had been attempts by other Sūfīs, especially the famous Qādirī master, Shāh 'Abdul Razzāq of Bansa (d. 1724)—a forefather of the Firangi Mahalis and a champion of popular Sufism—to emphasize the multiple manifestations of the same Truth and to make a plea for a reconciliation of Hindu ideas with Islamic beliefs. He had friendly relations with a *bairāgī*

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(Hindu mendicant) named Champat, who even invited him to view theatrical performances on stories of Krishna and the gopis.[105] ʻAbdul Razzāq Banswī is himself said to have had visions of Krishna and Rama and Lakshman. He supported Hindu beliefs and accepted their myths and memories.

The interaction between Hindu and Muslim mysticism deepened during the sixteenth century and was stimulated by the Persian translations of *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana*, and *Yoga Vashishtha*. The greatest exponent of *Nirguna Bhakti*, Kabīr (d. 1505), was known to have travelled widely around the area of Benaras and was in constant interaction with Hindu saints and Sūfīs. Although we have no confirmed evidence, it is highly likely that he would have exchanged ideas with Sūfīs of Kara, Manikpur, and Rudauli, whose views on *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, expressed in Hindawi, impressed Kabīr. ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, a descendant of ʻAbdul Haq **(p.62)** and a close friend of Shāh Muhibbullāh, writes about Kabīr in his *Mirāt-ul-asrār* and calls him *malāmatī* (a Sūfī sect), who was a *muwahhid* (believer in *tauhīd*), and a disciple of Shaikh Taqī (a Suhrawardī Sūfī) and Ramananda.[106] The popularity of the Nath yogic philosophical verses of Kabīr greatly increased among the *muwahhid*s, but even more remarkable was the growing interest in Vedanta.

Vedantic mysticism had its roots in the Upanishads and the Vedas and shared common ground with Sufism in some respects. Both included a purification of self, mastering of passions and desires, filling the mind exclusively with thought of God, and controlling bodily functions and mental processes till the objective world ceases to distract consciousness.[107] The similarity was even greater between *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, the dominant philosophy of Awadhi Sūfīs, and the thoughts of yogis and Vedantists. Vaishnavite elements were a welcome addition to the Sufic devotional poetry of Awadh. Mīr ʻAbdul Wāhid Bilgrāmī (d. 1608), a sixteenth century Sūfī, compiled a Persian dictionary called *Haqāʼiq-i-hindī* of Hindi songs well known to Sūfīs and gave prominence to those of Vaishnavites. In this work he endeavoured to identify Hindu religious figures with Muslim beliefs; thus Krishna meant for him Muhammad or Perfect Man, gopis signified angels, Uddhava (companion of Krishna) was likened to Gabriel, and the rivers Jamuna, Ganga, and Kalindi were rivers of *wahdat*, sometimes oceans of *maʻrifat*.[108]

Shaikh ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī wrote extensively on Hindu cosmogony and rendered the *Bhagvad Gītā* into Persian, under the tile *Mirāt-ul-haqāʼiq*.[109] For him, the teachings of Krishna in *Gītā* were so close to *wujūdī* ideas that they can be summed up:

> O Arjuna! Whatever you do consider Him as its author, associate none with Him and be assured that all is He [the *wujūdī* followers also believe in ʻAll is Heʼ or *hamā ūst*], that is One and no partner.[110]

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(p.63) He believed that the ‘true’ teachings of Krishna contained the secrets of *tauhīd* (equated with *tauhid-i-wujūdī*) and his allegorical reading of the *Gītā* brings out Krishna as a *muwahhid*, possibly a prophet but definitely not a divine figure or God. He also considered the Vedas to be revealed books. According to Roderic Vassie, *Mirāt-ul-haqā’iq* can be seen as a ‘dynamic Sūfī reconstruction’ of the *Bhagwad Gītā*, in which he puts the Krishna–Arjun relationship on a new plane—that of a spiritual guide and his disciple.[111]

One last point that merits mention regarding the religious climate of Awadh was the absence of any influential propagandist of the school of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī.[112] The immense influence of Shāh Mina, Shaikh ‘Abdul Haq, Mīr ‘Abdul Wāhid Bilgrāmī, and others could not be nullified easily. The hymns of Malik Muhammad Jāisī had taken firm root in the hearts of Awadhi people. We hear of one Shaikh Muhibbullāh (not to be confused with the Chishtī-Sābrī master) appointed at Manikpur by the Mujaddid, who faced such problems that he had to request a transfer to Allahabad; the request was accepted after much reproach.[113] There were, however, ripples created by the Mujaddid’s movement. In Jaunpur, for instance, Mullā Mahmūd independently waged a fairly effective opposition to *wujūdī* doctrines.[114]

Nevertheless, such opposition was not always successful, at least not in the Awadh region, and the Sūfīs there continued to play a major role in the process of assimilation of cultures and religious beliefs. The Chishtī-Sābrī leadership were also much influenced by the general religious atmosphere. Rudauli, a major Sūfī centre of the order, had given unusual acceptance to *wujūdī* ideas and the area around it was a hub of Nath-Panthi and other yogic traditions.[115] The Rudauli *khānqāh* of Shaikh **(p.64)** ‘Abdul Haq has been mentioned as a ‘clearing house’ of Hindu *sanyasis* and yogis and it was here that Chishtī-Sābrī traditions originated. There are evidences in *Anwār-ul-‘uyūn* pointing to the performance of yogic exercises by ‘Abdul Haq, unknown to earlier Chishtī Sūfīs. During his sojourn in Pandua, he was in touch with *qalandar*s and yogis and on the way to Rudauli, he is reported to have lain buried alive for six months.[116] On his resuscitation he is said to have assumed even more authority as a Sūfī master and disciples flocked around him in even larger numbers. He even had one of his disciples buried alive for a fortnight and when he came out alive, he was granted *khilāfat*.[117] As suggested by Simon Digby, these practices were definitely learnt from the Nath-Panthi traditions and were carried out to win the devotion of the local population.[118] In this milieu, Shaikh ‘Abdul Quddūs’ initial training at Rudauli left an indelible mark on his future life as a mystic. The most striking feature of the Sābrī ideology during this period was the stress laid on yogic exercises, many of which were adapted with considerable skill to fit into a Sūfī theological framework.

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The *Rushd nāmah* of ʻAbdul Quddūs is one of the earliest works by a Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh* that attempts a systematic integration of Hindu and Muslim mystical discipline. Even in his later years, he continued to teach *Rushd nāmah* and yogic physiological exercises to his disciples. He possessed extensive knowledge of the Arabic and Persian versions of *Amritkund* (a treatise on *Hatha yoga*) and, while at Shahabad, he taught its translation to his disciple Shaikh Sulaimān Māndavī, in return for lessons in Qur'ān recitation.[119] He was a frequent practitioner and a fervent advocate of *salāt-i-maʻkūs* (prayer performed upside down suspended by a rope), a practice similar to the yogic practice of *ultī-sādhna* associated with a group called '*Urdamukhi*'.[120] Another peculiar feature noted in regard **(p.65)** to *salāt-i-maʻkūs* was '*sultān-i-zikr*'— a term unknown in early Chishtī records, but which is, surprisingly, found in a work of Hājī Imdādullāh in the nineteenth century.[121] In the words of Simon Digby, 'this was a psycho-physical condition produced by continuous practice of *zikr* and *salāt-i-maʻkūs*, in which the person partially loses consciousness and in the state of mystical excitement secrets from the Unknown are revealed to him.'[122] Although Shāh Rukn-ud-dīn likened them to '*wahy*' (Divine revelation) received by the Prophet, the idea is very similar to the concept of '*anahada-sabda*' or the 'un-struck sound' prevalent among the yogis.[123] ʻAbdul Quddūs considered such practices to be compatible with Chishtī traditions.

Besides his interest in yogic exercises, ʻAbdul Quddūs was also a poet in Hindawi and Persian and some of his own verses interspersed in *Rushd nāmah* identify the Sūfī belief of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* with the philosophy of Gorakhnāth.[124] There are a few references to 'Gorakhnath', 'Shri Gorakh', 'Nath', 'O Nath', and so on, in his verses.[125] He wrote Hindawī *dohā*s and *shlok*s under the pen-name of *Alakh Dās* and is even reported to have had some instruction in Hindawi *dohā* writing.[126] Other practices like the *pās-i-anfās* (controlled breathing), on which he composed eloquent verses, was well known in the Chishtī tradition and may also be traced to the *prānāyāma* performed by yogis.

ʻAbdul Quddūs' successors retained a fascination for the Hindu Vedanta. Shāh Muhibbullāh's interest in Hindu mysticism and philosophy is revealed in one letter wherein he discusses Hindu cosmogony.[127] It is not known if he had studied it under Hindu scholars, but as compared to ʻAbdul Quddūs, his knowledge of Hindu mysticism seems to have been superficial. Nevertheless, he encouraged his disciples to learn about other **(p.66)** religious traditions. In a letter he informs ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, who himself had considerable knowledge of Hindu mysticism, that he was satisfied with the impression which Shāh Muhammadī (his own disciple) had made on the pundits.[128] Shāh Muhibbullāh did not fail to define the true spirit of peaceful co-existence. As revealed by his letters, he did not try to antagonize even his opponents and generally avoided controversies unless dragged into them. On being asked once

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by Dārā Shikoh about whether discrimination is permitted between Hindus and Muslims in matters of government, the Shaikh emphatically replied:

> Justice requires that the thought of the welfare of men should be uppermost in the minds of the rulers, so that people might be protected from the tyranny of the officials. It does not matter if one is a Believer or a non-Believer. All human beings are the creatures of God. If one has such a feeling, one will not differentiate between a Believer and a non-Believer, and will show sympathy and consideration towards both. The Qur'ān says and the *Futūhāt* has elucidated that the Prophet was sent as a mercy unto all mankind.[129]

By adopting an attitude of sympathy and an instinctive appreciation for all cults and creeds, the Chishtī-Sābrīs tried to create an emotional integration of people of all faiths. In doing so, they both benefited from and contributed to the socio-religious climate and the cultural richness of medieval Awadh. The Chishtī-Sābrīs, while firmly affirming their Islamic faith, did not carry this difference into social relationships. As suggested by Muzaffar Alam, the religious classes, even while promoting liberal outlook, were asserting the finality of their faith. He writes: 'Their discourses with Hindu ascetics and mendicants seem to have signified a kind of religious disputation in a spirit of competition.'[130] Thus, to 'Abdul Rahmān Chishtī, the *Bhagwad Gītā* was right only in so far as it either was, or could be made to appear, in harmony with the Islamic revelation and practice. Islam, being the final revelation, had abrogated all earlier revelations and Sūfīs, in searching other faiths, were always **(p.67)** bound by the restrictions of their own. Their purpose in introducing their select followers to the mystical practices of other faiths was not to weaken their Islamic identity but to sift through earlier revelations and practices to discover the original Islamic teachings on which the 'corruption' of sources was based.[131] The interests of the Muslim religious classes and the need for an Islamic temporal power remained paramount. This explains why 'Abdul Quddūs, even while being a follower of *wujūdī* ideas and a practitioner of yogic exercises, did not hesitate to write letters to the Mughal Emperors demanding subjugation of non-Muslim subjects and enhancement of the prestige of Muslim religious classes (*arbāb-i-'ilm-o-ma'rifat*).[132] The last few decades of the fifteenth century had witnessed great political turmoil in the Rudauli region where he was born and spent most of his life. The Rajput invasions of Rudauli and of other towns in the Sharqī Sultanate were quite common. In his lifetime, Rudauli was invaded by neighbouring Hindu chiefs. The Afghan wars with Sharqīs, and later, Barbak's struggle to succeed the Lodi sultan assisted in consolidating the power of Rajputs in the region.[133] 'Abdul Quddūs was forced to leave his hometown because of these upheavals and it was but natural for him to write strongly against the rising non-Muslim powers in the region. A strong Muslim authority guarding the interests of religious classes was thus a first priority in such situations. This also explains in part why in the eighteenth century, with the

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disintegration of the Mughal Empire and the dissolution of a powerful Muslim temporal authority, the Chishtī-Sābrīs did not share the same pluralist outlook as their predecessors and were increasingly drawn closer to Naqshbandī Sūfī traditions.

It was in such a pluralist atmosphere that the Chishtī-Sābrī order was born and its traditions defined. After ʻAbdul Quddūs, we do not come across a similar zeal in performing yogic exercises; nonetheless, an interest in Hindu religious practices, the belief in *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, and the practice of *samāʻ* and various forms of *zikr* continued in the Sābrī tradition well into the eighteenth century and later. There was continuity **(p.68)** in these traditions when the order moved from Awadh to Amroha, but certain elements of change can also be noticed. New mystic trends which emerged among the Chishtī and Naqshbandī leadership at Delhi were increasingly influencing the surrounding *qasbah*s. As the order came into greater contact with these trends, it had to respond by either disassociating itself from some of its early traditions or by defending and explaining them.

Notes:

([1]) For details on the orientalist reconstructions of Sufism, see Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston, 1997), pp. 1–18.

([2]) For instance, Margaret Smith compares some doctrines of Sufis with those of Christian mystics in *Rabia the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islam* (Cambridge, 1984). Arberry suggests that Sufism in its earliest phase grew out of the asceticism of certain individuals: A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (London, 1950). Persian influences have been shown by E. H. Palmer in *Oriental Mysticism* (London, 1986). Nicholson points to Christian, Buddhist, Perso–Indian pantheism, and Neo-platonic influences which crept into Sufism, but concludes: ʻEven if Islam had been miraculously shut off from contact with foreign religions and philosophies, some form of mysticism would have arisen in it, for the seeds were already thereʼ: R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (London, 1914), p. 20. R. C. Zaehner suggests Vedantic influences in his work *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism* (New York, 1960). Aziz Ahmad, while affirming the Islamic origin of Sufism, shows its interaction with Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism: Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), ch. 4.

([3]) The etymology of ʻSūfīʼ has also been contested. The different suggestions include: *safa* (purification of heart), *ahl-i-suffa* (Companions of the Prophet who continuously prayed in the Prophetʼs mosque at Medina), *saff* (people who try to pray in the first row of mosque), *Sufa* (an ancient tribe of Arabia that served the *Kaba*), *sophia* (Greek ʻwisdomʼ) and *suf* (wool), among others. Most scholars now accept *suf* as the origin of the term, since the early Sufis wore woollen garments. The term seems to have become current in the first century of Islam. For a

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detailed discussion, see K. A. Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht* (Karachi, 2007), vol. 1, ch. 2.

([4]) Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, pp. 26–31.

([5]) The Qur'ānic expression *al-nafs-al ammāra bi's-su* ('the soul commanding to evil', 12:53) forms the starting point for the Sufi way of purification. Unless one's lower self (*nafs-i-ammāra*) has been curbed, one cannot come closer to knowing God.

([6]) Some Sufi scholars have attempted commentaries on the Qur'ān from a purely mystical viewpoint. Among Indian works of this style are *Tabsīr-ur-Rahmān wa taysīr-ul-mannān* of 'Alā-ud-dīn bin Ahmad Maha'imī (d. 1431), *Tarjumat-ul-Qur'ān* of Shāh Muhibbullāh Allahābādī (d. 1648) and *Anwār-ul-asrār* of Shaikh 'Īsā (d. 1621): K. A. Nizami, 'Mysticism', in *Islam*, Guru Nanak Quincentenary Celebration Series (Patiala, 1969), p. 68, n. 9; see also Titus Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine* (Northamptonshire, 1976), pp. 41–50.

([7]) For details, Carl Ernst, 'Mystical Language and the Teaching Context in Early Sufi Lexicons', in *Mysticism and Language*, (ed.) Steven T. Katz (Oxford, 1992), pp. 181–201.

([8]) For instance, 'It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than [his] jugular vein.' (50:16); 'On the earth are signs for those of assured Faith, as also in your own selves: will ye not then see?' (51: 20–1); 'But We are nearer to him than you [Prophet], and yet [they] see not.' (56:85).

([9]) The Qur'ān is unequivocal in commending the life of the Prophet as a model for imitation: 'Ye have indeed in the Messenger of God a beautiful pattern [of conduct] for anyone whose hope is in God and the Final Day, and who engages much in the praise of God' (33:21).

([10]) 'Alī Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, (English transl.) R. A. Nicholson (Delhi, 1982), pp. 345–54.

([11]) D. B. MacDonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (Beirut, 1965), p. 227; see also, J. C. Archer, *Mystic Elements in Muhammad* (Yale, 1924). For the Qur'ānic basis of Sufism see Mir Valiuddin, *The Quranic Sufism* (Delhi, 1959); Martin Lings, 'The Koranic Origins of Sufism' *Sufi*, 18 (1993), pp. 5–9; Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, ch. 2. A number of *Hadīs-i-qudsī* or extra-Qur'ānic revelations are of equal importance for Sufis: Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, p. 51.

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([12]) R. A. Nicholson considered the idea of Divine Love to derive from Christianity, but Qur'ān and Prophetic Traditions are replete with teachings of Divine Love (*muhabba*). See his *The Mystics of Islam*, p. 111. The Qur'ān speaks of *muhabba* at several places, for instance, 2:165; 3:31; and 5:54.

([13]) The only significant English work on Rābia' Basrī is Margaret Smith's *Rabia the Mystic and Her Fellow-Saints in Islam*. One of her famous prayers is mentioned by Farīd-ud-dīn 'Attār: 'O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of Paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty.' Farīd-ud-dīn 'Attār, *Tazkirat-ul-auliyā'*, (English transl.) R. A. Nicholson (London, 1905), vol. 1, p. 73.

([14]) Later Sufis, including Abū Tālib al-Makkī (d. 996) in his *Quwwat-ul-qulūb*, Abul Nasr Sarrāj in his *Kitāb-ul-luma'*, 'Alī Hujwerī, in his *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, and Imām Qushayrī in his *Risāla* have discussed the doctrine in detail.

([15]) 'Alī Hujwerī mentions twelve mystic sects in his *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, p. 32.

([16]) See Carl Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany, 1985), pp. 63–72, 102–10.

([17]) Ghazālī lived as a Sufi following his retirement from the prestigious Nizamiyya seminary of Baghdad in 1095 and it was during this period that he wrote his magnum opus, *Ihyā'-ul-'ulūm al-dīn*. 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī, who became highly popular as a theologian in Baghdad, had spent nearly twenty–five years of his life as a wandering dervish, had a Sufi master Hammād al-Dabbās (d. 1130), and had received the *khirqa* (patched frock, which symbolized the grant of *khilāfat*) from Abū Sa'īd al-Mukharrimī (d. 1119). Cited in G. Makdisi, 'Ibn Taimiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya order', *American Journal of Arabic Studies* (1974), pp. 125–6; S. A. A. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (Delhi, 1978), vol. 1, p. 84.

([18]) Seyyed H. Nasr (ed.), *Islamic Spirituality II: Manifestations* (New York, 1991), p. 4.

([19]) The journey of *sulūk* passed through different spiritual stages (*maqām*) and emotional states (*hāl*). As Annemarie Schimmel explains, 'while a *maqām* is a lasting stage which a Sufi reaches by his own striving and cannot quit his *maqām* without fulfilling its obligations, *hāl* is a state that descends from God into a Sufi's heart without his being able to attract it when it goes or repel it when it comes': Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 99. The number and order of stages in a spiritual journey were differently identified in the different *silsilah*s, but the generally acknowledged stages included: *tauba* (repentance), *warā* (abstinence), *zuhd* (renunciation), *faqr* (poverty), *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude), *khauf* (fear), *rajā* (hope), *tawakkul*

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(contentment), *rizā* (submissive contentment with Divine Will), and *ma'rifat* (gnosis). For a detailed discussion, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 109–39; see also K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi, 2002), pp. 247–50. Likewise, the various emotional states (*hāl*) that descend on a Sufi included: *muhabbat* (Love of God), *shauq* (longing), *ghairat* (concentrating one's thought on God alone), *qurb* (proximity to God), *hayā* (shame at being found wanting in sincerity), *uns-o-haibat* (intimacy and awe), *qabz-o-bast* (contraction and expansion of heart), *fanā-o-baqā* (annihilation and subsistence), and *ittisāl* or *wasl* (union). For details, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 130–48; and Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India*, pp. 50–1. Other acts of devotion and worship were also to be practised by Sufis besides the obligatory ritual prayers (*salāt*) enjoined in Islam. These included the *nawāfil* (supererogatory prayers), *ishrāq* (after sunrise), *chāsht* (at forenoon), *zawāl* (after mid-day), *awwābīn* (at twilight), and *tahajjud* (between midnight and early dawn), along with ritual practices such as *zikr* (remembrance of God by reiteration of various formulae), *murāqaba* (contemplation/meditation), *chilla* (spiritual retreat), and *samā'* (audition assemblies), among others.

([20]) The establishment of *khānqāh*s was based on the conviction that a life of solitary, self-sufficient contemplation was incompatible with the highest mystic ideals as it isolates man from the energizing currents of social life. For details on *khānqāh* organization, see Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India*, pp. 62–4.

([21]) Bruce Lawrence neatly brings out the importance of a spiritual master: 'If the *pir* speaks and someone records, the *malfuz* is for the benefit of his disciples and successors. If he writes, either on his own initiative or in response to a request, and a copy of his letter is retained, the collection comprises a volume of *maktubat* for the edification of his spiritual descendants. His directives to a disciple (*ishara*) become an instructional treatise for the entire community of his followers. If he speculates on questions of metaphysical import or tries to justify a practice or to explain technical terms with mystic signification, he writes for all those who faced the same problems. If he prays to God, the words he utters become *aurad* (invocatory prayers) for his followers': Bruce Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute: The Extant Mystic Literature of Pre-Mughal Indian Sufism* (Tehran, 1978), pp. 91–2.

([22]) The *khilāfat-nāmah*s (letter of investiture) included many instructions and duties expected from the spiritual successors, but proselytization was not one of them. Most of the cases of conversion, when rarely mentioned in *malfūzāt*, relate to individuals who accepted Islam on being impressed by the personal example of a Sufi master. On this issue, see Bruce Lawrence, 'Early Indo Muslim Saints and Conversion', in *Islam in Asia*, (ed.) Y. Friedman, (Jerusalem, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 109–45. For a different view, see Raziuddin Aquil, 'Conversion in Chishti Sufi

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Literature (13th–14th centuries)', *Indian Historical Review* 24, nos. 1–2 (1997–8), pp. 70–94.

([23]) The *silsilah* had spread to Gujarat by the time of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā'. Two disciples of Shaikh Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī were from Nahrwala, namely Shaikh Mahmūd and Shaikh Hamīd-ud-dīn Ahmad. Later, disciples of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā', including Shaikh Saiyid Husain, Shaikh Husām-ud-dīn Multānī, and Shāh Barak Allāh, provided a firm foundation in Gujarat. Another of his disciples, Shaikh Sirāj-ud-dīn (d. 1357), introduced the *silsilah* in Bengal, where Shaikh Nūr Qutb-i-'Ālam (d. 1410) and Saiyid Ashraf Jahāngīr Simnānī later became prominent. In Malwa, Shaikh Wajīh-ud-dīn Yūsuf, Shaikh Kamāl-ud-dīn, and Maulānā Mughīs-ud-dīn carried out the activities of the order. Shaikh Burhān-ud-dīn Gharīb (d. 1340) was the first Chishtī to arrive in the Deccan after the death of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā'. See Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 1, pp. 236–50.

([24]) Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' divided religious devotion into two categories, *lāzmī* and *muta'addī*. The benefit of the former, consisting of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and other such practices, he believed, accrued to the devotee alone. But he considered the reward of the latter, which meant bringing advantage and comfort to fellow human beings, as unbounded: Amīr Khurd, *Siyar-ul-auliyā'* (Delhi, AH 1302), p. 411; Amīr Hasan Sijzī, *Fawā'id-ul-fu'ād* (Lucknow, 1884/ AH 1302), pp. 13–14; Hāmid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-majālis*, (ed.) K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1959), pp. 219–20.

([25]) Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India*, p. 280.

([26]) For details on the organizational structure of the Chishtī order, see K. A. Nizami, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Nizam-ud-din Auliya* (Delhi, 2007), p. 70.

([27]) Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 1, pp. 261–70; Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, pp. 264–96.

([28]) However, there were also some Sufi figures who claimed trans-historical initiation, completely bypassing the need for a *shajra*. These were termed 'Uwaisi' after Uwais Qaranī, a contemporary of the Prophet famed for his piety, but who never met him. There were also those Sufi figures who, it is claimed, were directly initiated by Khizr, 'the prophet of initiation'.

([29]) *Sahīh Bukhārī*, (English transl.) Muhammad Muhsin Khān (Maktab al-Riyaz-ul-Hadis, 1981), vol. 5, Book 57, Hadis nos. 2 and 3.

([30]) Khurd (*Siyar-ul-auliyā'*, p. 185) mentions a Shāikh Sābir, but questions have been raised about the identity of this person: 'Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dihlawī, *Akhbār-ul-akhyār* (Delhi, AH 1309), p. 69.

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([31]) Ghulām Muʿīn-ud-dīn ʿAbdullāh (Khwājah Khweshgī Chishtī), *Mʿārij-ul-wilāyat* (MS K. A. Nizami Personal Collection, Aligarh), vol. 1, fols. 263–6; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, (Urdu transl.) Captain Wahid Bakhsh Siyal (New Delhi, 2004), pp. 497–509; Shaikh Allāh Diyā Chishtī, *Siyar-ul-aqtāb*, (Urdu transl.) Muhammad Muʿīn-ud-dīn Dardāyī, *Tazkirah-i-khwājgān-i-chisht* (Karachi, 1979), pp. 199–204; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazinat-ul-āsfiyā* (Lucknow, 1873), vol. 1, pp. 315–19; Mushtāq Ahmad, *Anwār-ul-ʿāshiqīn* (Hyderabad, AH 1332); ʿAlī Asghar Chishtī, *Jawāhar-i-farīdī* (Lahore, AH 1301), pp. 279–83; ʿAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār* (MS K. A. Nizami Personal Collection, Aligarh), fols. 626–31; Ghulām Sarwar, *Hadīqat-ul-auliyā'* (Lahore, AH 1292), pp. 38–41. These sources claim that Shaikh ʿAlī Sābir was a nephew of Bābā Farīd and also his son-in-law. During his initial training at the Chishtī *khānqāh* he is said to have been put in charge of distributing the *langar* or free food.

([32]) These *tazkirah*s include Muhammad Hāfiz Allāh Chishtī, *Tazkirah-i-sābriyah* (Delhi, n.d.); Mushtāq Ahmad Hanafī, *Zikr-i-khair hazrat makhdūm* (Sadhaura, n.d.); Maulānā Saiyid Zafar Husain, *Anwār-i-sābir al-maʿrūf hayāt-i-sābir* (Lahore, 1920); ʿUmar Khān Fārūqī, *Zuhūr-i-sābrī* (Saharanpur, 1900/AH 1317); and Shāh Muhammad Hasan Sābrī *Haqīqat-i-gulzār-i-sābrī* (Rampur, AH 1304).

([33]) Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (Karachi, 2002), p. 47.

([34]) Shaikh ʿAlī Sābir is said to have left only one *khalīfah*, Shaikh Shams-ud-dīn Turk (d. *ca*. 1315), who, as the name suggests, had come to India from Turkey in search of a spiritual mentor. See Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 321–5; Allāh Diyā Chishtī, *Siyar-ul-aqtāb*, pp. 205–13; ʿAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, (K. A. Nizami Personal Collection [Aligarh]), fols. 699–703; Muʿīn-ud-dīn ʿAbdullāh, *Mʿārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 1, fols. 489–92; Ghulām Sarwar, *Hadīqat-ul-auliyā'*, p. 41; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, pp. 510–26. Some *tazkirah*s mention him as serving with the army of Sultān Balban or Sultān ʿAlā-ud-dīn Khaljī.

([35]) Jalāl-ud-dīn Mahmūd Pānīpatī (d. *ca.* 1364) was a successor of Shams-ud-dīn Turk. He is much acclaimed in *Mʿārij-ul-wilāyat* and is said to have attracted people from different areas and received enormous *futuh* (unsolicited charity). For his account, see Muʿīn-ud-dīn ʿAbdullāh, *Mʿārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 1, fol. 492; Allāh Diyā Chishtī, *Siyar-ul-aqtāb*, pp. 214–26; ʿAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, fols. 790–7; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 361–5; Ghulām Sarwar, *Hadīqat-ul-auliyā'*, pp. 45–6; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, pp. 527–50.

([36]) ʿAbdul Quddūs Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-ʿuyūn fi asrār-ul-maknūn* (Aligarh, 1905). For biographical details on Abdul Haq, see Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*,

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vol. 1, pp. 384–7; Allāh Diyā Chishtī, *Siyar-ul-aqtāb*, pp. 227–31; ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, fols. 875–96; Muʻīn-ud-dīn ʻAbdullāh, *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 1, fol. 492; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, pp. 551–84.

([37]) Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-ʻuyūn*, p. 13; ʻAbdul Haq, *Akhbār-ul-akhyār*, p. 183; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 392–3; Muhammad Ghausī Shattārī, *Gulzār-i-abrār*, (Urdu transl.) Maulvi Fazl Ahmad (Agra, AH 1326), pp. 104–5.

([38]) Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-ʻuyūn*, pp. 45–54, 100–1.

([39]) One of the most detailed studies of Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs is ʻIjāz-ul-Haq Quddūsī, *Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī aur unkī taʻlimāt* (Karachi, 1961). Simon Digby's article ʻAbd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi', in *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, (ed.) K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1972–5), pp. 1–66, vol. 3, also provides a detailed analysis of various aspects of his personality.

([40]) Although a disciple of Shaikh Muhammad, ʻAbdul Quddūs claimed direct spiritual contact with Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq, from whom he received spiritual grace. Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī* (Delhi, 1894), p. 10; for his own account of his reception in the *khānqāh*, see Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-ʻuyūn*, pp. 107–9.

([41]) In his early life ʻAbdul Quddūs appears to have held aloof from those in political power. We are informed that he was most annoyed whenever Qāzī Mahmūd Thānesarī, the *darogha* of Rudauli, tried to visit him. Quddūsī, *Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī*, pp. 217–18.

([42]) Quddūsī, *Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī*, ch. 22.

([43]) For biographical details see Maulvī Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, (Urdu transl.) Muhammad Ayyub Qadiri (Karachi, 1961), pp. 146–7; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 439–41; Muʻīn-ud-dīn ʻAbdullāh, *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 2, fols.1–14; Shattārī, *Gulzār-i-abrār*, pp. 579–80; ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, fols. 922–3; Ghulām Sarwar, *Hadīqat-ul-auliyā'*, p. 47; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, pp. 673–97.

([44]) Muhammad Hāshim Kishmī, *Zubdat-ul- maqāmāt* (Lucknow, AH 1307), p. 103; cf. Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, p. 264.

([45]) Jalāl-ud-dīn Thānesarī, *Irshād-ut-tālibīn* (n.p., AH 1304), pp. 379–84.

([46]) Faqīr Muhammad Jhelamī, *Hadā'iq-ul-hanafiya* (Lucknow, 1886), pp. 401–2; Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, p. 525; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 463–6; ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, fols. 923–4; Muʻīn-ud-

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dīn ʻAbdullāh, *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 2, fols. 14–27; Muhammad Akram Baraswī, *Iqtibās-ul-anwār*, pp. 698–728.

([47]) Nūr-ud-dīn Muhammad Jahāngīr, *Tuzuk-i-jahāngīrī*, (English transl.) A. Rogers, (ed.) H. Beveridge (Delhi, 1989), vol. 1, p. 60. The mystic source *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, however, attributes his eviction to his increasing popularity as an alchemist (*kimiagar*), which aroused suspicion in the mind of Emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27). Whatever the reason for it, the decision proved a blessing in disguise.

([48]) One of his disciples, Shaikh Jānallāh (d. 1630), who accompanied his *pir* to Balkh and finally settled at Lahore, introduced the *silsilah* in the region. Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, p. 466; Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, pp. 267, 343.

([49]) The branch through Shaikh Muhammad Sādiq was continued by Shaikh Muhammad Dāūd (d. 1683), Shāh Abul Mālī (d. 1704), Shaikh Saundha (d. 1716), and Mīrān Bhīkh Chishtī (d. 1718). Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 475–6, 483–94. The last mentioned is reported to have left about fifty *khalīfah*s in the Delhi–Saharanpur region itself, which included people of varied occupations, from *mansabdars* and professional men to ascetics and Sufis. Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, vol. 1, pp. 489–94.

([50]) Shāh Muhibbullāh, *Manāzir-i-akhass-ul-khawās* (MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Shifta Collection, Persian, 60/55); also quoted in Hāfiz Muhammad Husain, *Anwār-ul-ʻārifīn* (Bareilly, n.d.), p. 435.

([51]) Born and brought up at Murcia and Seville in Andulasia, Ibn ʻArabī travelled widely to Tunis, Mecca, Mosul, Baghdad, several towns in Turkey, Egypt, and Syria, finally settling in Damascus in 1223.

([52]) *Tauhīd-i-wujūdī* has been variously translated by scholars as 'unity of being', 'pantheism', 'monism', 'existential monism', or 'testimonial monism'. Some scholars like Henry Corbin and Seyyed H. Nasr have tried giving it a non-pantheistic interpretation: Seyyed H. Nasr, (ed.) *Three Muslim Sages* (Cambridge: Mass., 1963); Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi* (Princeton, 1997). Other important works include, A. E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Din Ibn ul Arabi* (Cambridge, 1939); William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany, 1989). Credit for spreading the teachings of Ibn ʻArabī goes to his favourite disciple Sadruddīn Qunyawī (d. 1274), who was also the first to comment on the *Fusūs*. His disciples al-Jandī (d. 1300) and Fakhr-ud-dīn ʻIrāqī (d. 1289) further spread the ideas of Ibn ʻArabī. Iraqi's *Lamaʻat* ('Divine Gleams') helped more than any other work to introduce those ideas to the Persian-speaking world while al-Jandī's *Nafahat-ul-ruh* made prolific use of his teachings. Within a century, Ibn ʻArabī's writings had influenced some

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well-known scholars of Islamic world, such as Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī (d. 1273), al-Kāshānī (d. 1330), Mahmūd Shabistarī (d. 1320), and Dāūd Qaysarī (d. 1350). In the fifteenth century, two well-known Sufi authors, ‘Abdul Karīm al-Jilī (d. 1428) and ‘Abdul Rahmān Jāmī (d. 1492), became the preeminent exponents of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas. Al-Jilī’s *Insān-i-kāmil* represents a re-interpretation and revivification of his teachings, while Maulānā Jāmī’s commentary on the *Fusūs* became well-known alike in Persia and India. For the influence of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings, see Seyyed H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, pp. 118–20; William Chittick, ‘Ibn Arabi and His School’, in *Islamic Spirituality II: Manifestations*, (ed.) Seyyed H. Nasr (New York, 1991), pp. 49–79; William Chittick, ‘Notes on Ibn al-Arabi’s Influence in the Subcontinent’, *The Muslim World* 82, nos. 3–4 (1992), 218–41.

([53]) Abdul Haq Ansari, ‘Ibn Arabi: The Doctrine of Wahdat al wujud’, *Islamic Studies* 38, no. 2, (1999), pp. 149–92.

([54]) K. A. Nizami, ‘Hazrat Shaikh Akbar Muhiuddin Ibn Arabi aur Hindustan’, in his *Tārīkhī maqālāt* (Delhi, 1965), pp. 20–1.

([55]) Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute*, pp. 88–9. Although Farishtah mentions *Fusū*s in the list of books available to Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā’, the evidence is not corroborated by any contemporary source. Muhammad Qāsim Farishtah, *Tārikh-i-Farishtah*, (Lucknow, AH 1281), vol. 2, p. 391; Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā’ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 1, p. 404.

([56]) Mas‘ūd Bak was a close associate of Sultān Firoz and a disciple of Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh of Delhi. He has left a Diwan titled *Nūr-ul-‘uyūn* and a book *Mirāt-ul-‘ārifīn*, which reveal the openness with which *wujūdī* ideas were being discussed. Mas‘ūd Bak had to pay the price and a *fatwa* was issued against him, leading to his execution. Both his works present a clear exposition of *wujūdī* ideas and show the influence of ‘Irāqī’s *Lama‘at* and of Āin-ul-quzzāt Hamadānī’s *Tamhīdāt*: Nizami, ‘Hazrat Shaikh Akbar Muhīuddin Ibn ‘Arabī aur Hindustān’, pp. 22–3.

([57]) Considerable research has been done on Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī. A pioneering study has been Yohanan Friedmann, *Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi: An Outline of His Thought and a Study of His Image in the Eyes of Posterity* (Montreal, 1971). For Sirhindi’s views on *tauhid*, see Abdul Haq Ansari, *Sufism and Shariah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi’s Effort to Reform Sufism* (Leicester, 1986). Other useful works by the same author include ‘Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi’s Doctrine of Wahdat al Shuhud’, *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 3 (1998), pp. 218–313 and ‘Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī on Wahdat ‘l-Shuhud’, *Islam and the Modern Age* 15, no. 1 (1984), pp. 16–24. See also: Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *The Mujaddid’s Conception of Tawhid* (Delhi, 1970); and Iqbal Sabir, ‘The Life and

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Times of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi', (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1990).

([58]) Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī* (Lucknow, 1877), 3 vols., letter no. 272.

([59]) Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, letter no. 272.

([60]) As pointed out by Abdul Haq Ansari, both philosophies discussed *tauhīd* but the main point of difference was on the question how God relates to the world. Ibn 'Arabī believed that God's existence is identical with the existence of the world, He is immanent and transcendent. Sirhindī believed that God's existence is not identical with the world, nor is the world His manifestation. Ibn 'Arabī, by calling the world '*zill*' (shadow), denied that it is other than God, or that it is a lower order of reality. But what Sirhindī meant by '*zill*' was that the world depends on God for its existence and is an altogether different being, separate from God and almost a non-entity: Ansari, *Sufism and Shariah: A Study of Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi's Effort to Reform Sufism*, pp. 101–17.

([61]) Ansari, 'Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi's Doctrine of Wahdat al Shuhud', p. 288.

([62]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 9; Nizami, 'Hazrat Shaikh Akbar Muhīuddīn Ibn 'Arabī aur Hindustān', p. 27.

([63]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 55.

([64]) MS British Library, London, Ethe, 1924 (16).

([65]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 58.

([66]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, pp. 11–12, 49, 60–5; 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī, *Rushd Nāmah*, (Jhajjar, 1897), p. 25.

([67]) Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 348; 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī, *Maktūbāt-i-quddūsī* (Delhi, n.d.), pp. 89–90, 101.

([68]) He believed that one who saw God and not the idol was a true worshipper, but one who saw stone and not God was given to unbelief. Gangohī, *Maktūbāt-i-quddūsī*, pp. 171–3.

([69]) Cited in Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, p. 265. Khwāja Bāqi Billāh, *Maktūbāt-i- Bāqī Billāh*, in *Kulliyat-i-Baqi Billah*, (eds) Abul Hasan Zaid Faruqi and Burhan Ahmad Faruqi (Lahore, n.d.), letter no. 55, pp. 119–20.

([70]) His letters addressed to Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn exhort him to concentrate more on the obligatory (*farz*) prayers than *nawāfil* (supererogatory), or *zikr*, *fikr* (meditation), and *murāqaba* (contemplation). He also criticized the practice of performing *sijda* (prostration) in front of one's *pir* and advised him to discourse

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in his *khānqāh* more on *fiqh* than *tasawwuf*. Sirhindi, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, vol. 1, letter no. 29, pp. 36–8.

([71]) Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, vol. 1, letter no. 30, pp. 38–40.

([72]) Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, p. 404.

([73]) MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Abdul Hay Collection, 3/562.

([74]) MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Habibganj Collection, 21/241.

([75]) MS British Library, London, India Office, 1369.

([76]) MS British Library, London, India Office, 1357.

([77]) MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Subhan Allah Collection, 297.7/34.

([78]) For a list of his works, see Yusuf Husain Khan, ʻShah Muhibbullah of Allahabad and his Mystical Thought', *Islamic Culture* 38, no. 4 (1964), pp. 318–19; Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, pp. 17–18; and Malihe Moalem, ʻSufi Thoughts of Muhibbullah Ilahabadi and His Concept of Wahdat al Wujud' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Jamia Hamdard University, 2007).

([79]) Hafiz M. Tahir Ali (ed.) *Manazir-i-akhass-ul-khawas, Shaikh Muhibullah Ilahabadi* (Shantiniketan, 1993); and Hafiz M. Tahir Ali, ʻAn Important Persian Work on Sufism (Manazir-i-akhass al-khawass), by Sh. Muhibullah of Allahabad (d. 1058/1648)', *Islamic Culture* 54, no. 1 (1980), pp. 31–8.

([80]) MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh; for details, see G. A. Lipton, ʻMuhibb Allah Ilahabadi's Taswiya Contextualised', in *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World during the Early-Modern and Modern Periods*, (eds) Denis Hermann and Fabrizio Speziale (Berlin, 2010), pp. 475–97; and G. A. Lipton, ʻMuhibb Allah Ilahabadi: South Asian Heir to Ibn Arabi', in *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*, vol. 45 (2009), pp. 103–17.

([81]) Shāh Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Subhan Allah Collection, 297.71/14, fol. 184b.

([82]) See below, pp. 135–6.

([83]) These letters are addressed to Shaikh ʻAbdul Rashīd Jaunpurī, Mīr Saiyid Muhammad Qannaujī, Shaikh ʻAbdul Rahīm Khairābādī, Shaikh Tāj Muhammad Fathpurī, Shaikh ʻAbdul Rahmān Chishtī, Mullā Mahmūd Jaunpurī, and Shaikh Hāmid Sadrpurī: Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*.

([84]) Dara Shikoh was interested in Hindu philosophy and was given to *wujūdī* beliefs. His contact with the famous Qādirī Sūfis Miān Mīr (d. 1635) and Mullā Shāh (d. 1661) must have kindled this interest. For details, see K. R. Qanungo,

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Dara Shukoh (Calcutta, 1952), vol. 1. In fact, in one of his letters he claims to have accepted the governorship of Allahabad because of the presence of Shāh Muhibbullāh. Qanungo, *Dara Shukoh*, vol. 1, p. 17.

([85]) A partial translation of these letters is presented in Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, pp. 139–42.

([86]) Ghulām ʻAlī Āzād Bilgrāmī, *Maʻāsir-ul-kirām*, (Agra, 1910), vol. 1, pp. 202–3; Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind* pp. 486–7; Jhelamī, *Hadāʻiq-ul-hanafiya*, pp. 412–13.

([87]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbat-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fols. 47b–49a, 98a, 112a, 115b, 152a.

([88]) He was a disciple of Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq Muhaddis Dihlawī. For biographical details, see Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, p. 297; Bilgrāmī, *Maʻāsir-ul-kirām*, vol. 1, pp. 203–4; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā*, vol. 1, pp. 473–4; Jhelamī, *Hadāʻiq-ul-hanafiya*, pp. 456–7.

([89]) Muʻīn-ud-dīn ʻAbdullāh, *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 2, fol. 273.

([90]) Shams-ud-daulā Shahnawāz Khān, *Maʻāsir-ul-umarāʼ*, (ed.) H. Beveridge (Patna, 1979), vol. 3, p. 606; see also: Muʻīn-ud-dīn ʻAbdullāh, *Mʻārij-ul-wilāyat*, vol. 2, fols. 271–344.

([91]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbat-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fols. 112a–115a.

([92]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbat-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fols. 32a, 173a, 100a–100b, 113a, 169b, 32b.

([93]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbat-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fol. 166b.

([94]) Francis Robinson, ʻScholarship and Mysticism in Early 18th Century Awadhʼ, in *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds) A. L. Dallapiccola, and S. Zingel-Ave (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 384.

([95]) Gangohī, *Maktūbāt-i-quddūsī*, p. 205.

([96]) Dohas of Bābā Farīd can be found in Khurd, *Siyar-ul- auliyāʼ*, and also in *Sabaʻ Sanābil* of Mīr ʻAbdul Wāhid Bilgrāmī (Kanpur, 1299 AH), p. 58. For the views of Gesudaraz, see Saiyid Akbar Husainī, *Jawāmiʻ-ul-kalim* (Hyderabad, n.d.), pp. 172–3.

([97]) For details, Seyyed H. Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York, 2004), ch. 1; See Qurʼān, 10:47; 14:4; 17:15; 35:24; and 40:78. This view can also be discerned among Sufis of the Naqshbandī order. For instance, Ahmad Sirhindī also believed that there was hardly any place to which prophets had not been sent: Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, vol. 1, p. 260.

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Similarly, in the eighteenth century also, Mirzā Mazhar expressed his views in a letter and advised that one should neither confidently accuse the 'prophets of India' and their followers of unbelief, nor should one affirm a belief in their salvation. He believed that the Vedas were revealed books containing Divine orders, didactic stories about the past, and prophecies about the future: Shāh Ghulām 'Alī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī* (Delhi, 1891–2), pp. 99–101; and Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt* (Muradabad, 1891), letter no. 14. Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, the illustrious successor of Shāh Walīullāh, believed that Hindu avatars were forms of Divine manifestation and that Hindus were unable to distinguish between the external form and the epiphany of God: Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, *Fatāwa-i-'azīzī*, (Urdu transl.) Haji Muhammad Zaki (Karachi, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 140–1.

([98]) Amīr Khusrau, *Nuh sipihr*, p. 163, as cited in Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India*, p. 279.

([99]) Cited in Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India*, p. 278.

([100]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 20; as translated by Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537)', p. 35.

([101]) Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 347.

([102]) 'Abdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-makhlūqāt* (MS British Library, London, Rieu, iii, 1034a), fol. 240b.

([103]) Shah Kalimullah Jahānābādī, *Kashkol-i-kalīmī*, (ed. and Urdu transl.) Muhammad Abdul Ahad (Delhi, AH 1311), p. 16.

([104]) Muzaffar Alam, 'Assimilation from a Distance: Confrontation and Sufi Accommodation in Awadh Society', in *Tradition, Dissent and Ideology*, (eds) R. Champakalakshmi and S. Gopal (Delhi, 1996), p. 190.

([105]) Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, pp. 396–7.

([106]) 'Abdul Rahmān Chishtī, *Mirāt-ul-asrār*, fol. 499b. Later, according to the same work, he joined the Firdausi master Shaikh Bhīkh and received *khirqa* from him.

([107]) B. N. Pande, 'The Vedant and Sufism: A Comparative Study', in *Contemporary Relevance of Sufism*, (ed.) Syeda Saiyidain Hameed (Delhi, 1993), p. 9.

([108]) For details, see Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, pp. 359–62.

([109]) For details on Shāh 'Abdul Rahmān, see Muzaffar Alam, 'Religion and Politics in Awadh Society: 17th c. and early 18th c.' pp. 321–49.

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([110]) Cited in Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 2, p. 391.

([111]) Roderic Vassie, 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti & the Bhagvadgita: "Unity of Religion" Theory in Practice', in *The Heritage of Sufism: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)*, (ed.) Leonard Lewisohn (Oxford, 1999), vol. 2, p. 375.

([112]) For details, see S. A. A. Rizvi, *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Agra, 1965), pp. 273–4; also Muzaffar Alam, 'Assimilation from a Distance', pp. 176–7.

([113]) Sirhindī, *Maktūbāt-i-Imām Rabbānī*, vol. 3, letter nos. 7 and 13.

([114]) Similarly, a Chishtī leader of Amethi, Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn, reportedly snatched *Fusū*s from the hands of a son of a Sufi and gave him another book: M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims* (London, 1967), pp. 306–7.

([115]) For details on the ideas associated with the Naths, see Akshaya K. Banerjea, *Philosophy of Gorakhnath* (Delhi, 1983).

([116]) Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-'uyūn*, pp. 26–8, 53–4.

([117]) Gangohī, *Anwār-ul-'uyūn*, p. 90.

([118]) Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD)', vol. 3, p. 38.

([119]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 41; Gangohī, *Maktūbāt-i-quddūsī*. The title of the book is *Hauz-ul-hayāt*, an exact translation of *Amritkund*. For *Hatha yoga*, see Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, pp. 334–5.

([120]) Rukn-ud-dīn, *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, p. 18; Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD)', vol. 3, p. 50; Mohsin Fānī, *Dabistān-i-mazāhib* (Bombay, 1846), p. 170; the only other known Sufi in India to have performed *salāt-i-ma'kūs* was Bābā Farīd.

([121]) Hājī Imdādullāh, *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiya*, (ed.) Waqar Ali bin Mukhtar Ali (Deoband, n.d.), p. 31. Shaikh Rukn-ud-dīn suggests that the term is taken from *Risāla-i-makkiya* (probably Ibn 'Arabī's *Futūhāt-i-makkiyah*): *Latā'if-i-quddūsī*, pp. 16–18.

([122]) Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD)', vol. 3, p. 48.

([123]) Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD)', vol. 3, p. 50.

([124]) For the teachings of Gorakhnath, see Banerjea, *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*.

([125]) Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India*, vol. 1, p. 336. For an analysis of his poetry, see Digby, 'Abd al Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 AD)', vol. 3, pp. 51–66.

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([126]) Quddūsī, *Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī*, p. 420.

([127]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fol. 168a.

([128]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*, fol. 171b.

([129]) Muhibbullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-Shāh Muhibbullāh*; as cited in K. A. Nizami, 'Impact of Sufi Saints on Indian Society and Culture', *Islamic Culture* 58, no. 1 (January 1984), pp. 45–6.

([130]) Muzaffar Alam, 'Competition and Co-existence: Indo-Islamic Interaction in Medieval North India', *Itinerario* 13, no. 1 (1989), p. 45.

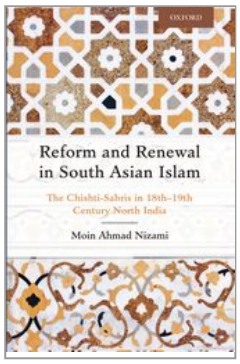
([131]) This view has been given by Vassie, 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti & the Bhagvadgita', vol. 2, pp. 367–77.

([132]) For his letters to nobles and rulers, see Quddūsī, *Shaikh ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī*, pp. 434–60.

([133]) For details, see Mian M. Saeed, *The Sharqi Sultanate of Jaunpur* (Karachi, 1972).

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Trends in Eighteenth-Century Sufism in North India

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter 2 studies the beginning of revival and renewal movements in Shah Waliullah's (d. 1762) Delhi. It focuses on the different intellectual trends which were becoming prominent in north India mainly as a result of the activities of religious scholars trained in Waliullahi traditions. These trends eventually affected the religious ethos of British north India and became the seed-bed of religious reform. They are discussed at two levels: at the institutional level (the emergence of joint *khanqah-madrasah*s, the amalgamation of Sufi-*alim* traditions and the intermingling of Sufi orders) and at ideological level (the growing emphasis on Shariat and Scriptures and the corresponding adjustments in religious thought). Over the nineteenth century, the Chishti-Sabri establishment in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab were increasingly drawn towards these trends owing to the complex spiritual networks which helped in accelerating the process of *ihya* and *tajdid* in suburban areas.

Keywords: Naqshbandi, ihya-o-tajdid, Shah Waliullah, khanqahs and madrasahs, multiple affiliations, 'neo-Sufism', Shariat

The eighteenth century was marked by trends that emerged within the Sūfī tradition and brought about consequential changes in the religious milieu of *qasbah*s in north India. These trends stimulated a new understanding of Sufism, brought different orders closer to each other, and encouraged a rapprochement on a number of intellectually difficult issues of Sufism. In almost every branch of Muslim religious thought scholars produced a growing body of writings; the cleavage between Sūfī and '*ālim* traditions was minimized, their differences

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subdued, with both consciously striving to enlarge their constituencies. The century also witnessed, not only in India but worldwide, the emergence of so-called 'neo-Sūfī' responses to the political challenges faced by the Islamic world and as a result of introspective reform within Sūfī orders. There was rethinking, defence and, at times, a rejection of certain Sūfī practices. Under such conditions, when *ijtihād* was increasingly being favoured, the challenge for many Sūfī orders was to adhere to their spiritual heritage and traditions and to present their mystic doctrines as legally permissible to religious scholars.

(p.70) In analysing some of these eighteenth-century trends, this chapter highlights their significance for the Muslim religious leadership and their impact on regional and local Sūfī institutions.[1] Eighteenth-century Delhi saw the resurgence of many Sūfī orders, including the Chishtī-Nizāmī, Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī, and the Naqshbandī-Mazharī. It was in this period that Shāh Kalīmullāh (d. 1729) gave the Chishtī-Nizāmī order a centralized leadership, while it expanded into neighbouring areas, particularly the Punjab.[2] Under him and his successor Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn (d. 1784), Delhi became a major centre of Chishtī-Nizāmī activity. For his role in its expansion, Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn came to be hailed as a *mujaddid* (renewer) of the Chishtī-Nizāmī branch.[3] From Delhi, his disciples, led by Maulānā Nūr Muhammad (d. 1791), spread to *qasbah*s and towns such as Taunsa, Ahmadpur, Chachran, Makhad, Jalalpur, Siyal, Golrah, Mahar, Rampur, Bareilly, Jaipur, and Ajmer.[4] Another successor of Shāh Kalīmullāh, Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn (d. 1730), after initial training in Delhi, left for the Deccan where he achieved considerable success and popularity. There, his presence attracted a large attendance of people from all quarters, as attested by his biographer Khwāja Kāmgār Khān.[5] His settling at Aurangabad in Deccan gave an impetus to the order not seen for three centuries (that is, since the death of Saiyid Gesū Darāz in 1422).

(p.71) As well as for the Chishtīs, Delhi became the focal point of the expanding Naqshbandī order. Pre-eminent among the Naqshbandīs was Shāh Walīullāh who, while claiming a connection with every mystic order, remained firm on Naqshbandī traditions. His prolific writings covered all branches of Islamic learning, such as Qur'ānic exegesis, Hadīs, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *kalām* (scholastic theology), *munāzarah* (debates), *tasawwuf* (Sufism), *tazkirah*s (biographies), poetry, and religious and political correspondence. Two well-known Sūfī poets, Khwāja Nāsir 'Andalīb (d. 1759) and his son and successor Mīr Dard (d. 1785), also resided in Delhi.[6] Hamid Algar rightly compares the eminence of Naqshbandī poets in Delhi at this time to that of Jāmī and Nawāi in Timurid Herat.[7] In 1747, Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān (d. 1781) became the head of the Naqshbandī *khānqāh* at Delhi and transformed the order into practically a new *silsilah*, thereafter called the Shamsia-Mazharia (or Naqshbandī-Mazharia). He had close contacts with Sūfīs of other *silsilah*s operating in Bareilly, Sambhal, Muradabad, and Shahjahanpur. His foremost *khalīfāh*s, Shāh Ghulām 'Alī (d. 1825) of Delhi, Qāzī Sanāullāh (d. 1810) of Panipat, and Maulvī Na'īmullāh (d.

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1804) of Bahraich, played a role in the subsequent expansion of the Naqshbandī order.

Delhi also became a centre for the transnational diffusion of the order into Arabia and Central Asia.[8] A contemporary of Shāh Walīullāh, **(p.72)** Muhammad Murtaza al-Zābidī (d. 1791) studied at the Madrasah-i-Rahīmia in Delhi and travelled to Yemen and Cairo, where he became a well-known scholar of Hadīs. As noticed by John Voll, 'He joined together the Neo-Sufism of Shah WaliAllah in India, the Naqshbandiyyah ideas that had developed in both India and the Arabian Peninsula, and the Khalwatiyyah inspired Neo-Sufism of the eastern Mediterranean.'[9] Perhaps the most consequential spread was of the Khālidī branch of the Naqshbandī order. Its originator, Maulānā Khālid al-Baghdādī (d. 1826), was a student of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz of Delhi and a premier *khalīfah* of Shāh Ghulām 'Alī. After his training at the Naqshbandī *khānqāh*s in India, he returned to Sulaimania in 1811. He infused a new strength into the order, gained wide popularity in Baghdad, and finally took up residence in Damascus. The Khālidīs spread in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Rumelia, and became the foremost order in Anatolia. From Mecca, they spread into Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, and the Philippines.[10]

Maulānā Khālid was only one of the many disciples who had spent time at the Naqshbandī *khānqāh*s in India. Shāh Ghulām 'Alī's *khānqāh* at Delhi was a particular attraction for visitors from Syria, Baghdad, Egypt, China, Ethiopia, Turkistan, Yemen, Qandahar, Ghazni, and other places, and we come across names like Shaikh Ahmad 'Kurdī' and Saiyid Ismā'īl 'Madanī' among his disciples, indicating the international impact of the order.[11] Some of the disciples, like Shāh Gul **(p.73)** Muhammad, were sent to Bukhara while others worked in Turkistan, Sabzwar, Ghazni, and Constantinople.[12] Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān's family had close ties with this *khānqāh* to which his father and elder brother were frequent visitors.[13]

An equally important role was played by the growing contact of Indian religious scholars with those in the Hijaz. The emphasis on the study of Hadīs had already revived by the early eighteenth century as a result of this contact, which became more frequent due to improvement in sea transport. As Aziz Ahmad points out, the change in pilgrim route from land to sea had a deep impact on theological developments in British India.[14] The growing insensitiveness towards Persianate elements and a revival of Arab traditions can be linked, to some extent, to this change of route. After the suppression of the Wahhābī movement around the year 1813, Mecca became a centre for Sūfī oders in the Muslim world and hajj pilgrims were often initiated into one or other of these orders.

Besides this transnational expansion and impact of Sūfī orders, the religious scholars at Delhi also created networks and familial links with the 'ulamā and Sūfīs of neighbouring *qasbah*s. These contacts opened a healthy dialogue

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between the city and suburban areas and helped in the proliferation of revivalist ideas. The Delhi *madrasah*s and *khānqāh*s, which trained a significant number of students from *qasbah*s, helped to spread their understanding of Sufism to local seminaries and hospices. It **(p.74)** is, therefore, necessary to understand the trends that emerged in the Sūfī tradition of Delhi and then became widespread among the Walīullāhī legatees. It was these trends that influenced the Sābrīs during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and led to a significant change in their thought and practice.

These trends may be distinguished into two kinds—those affecting institutional or organizational structure and those affecting the ideas and rationale of Sufism. Different factors (political and intellectual) gave birth to these trends. The general waning of political power in the Islamic world and growing contact with the West was already so evident as to create anxiety and alarm among Muslim intellectuals. While the most extensive of the Islamic empires were witnessing decline, many other parts of the Islamic world were experiencing the expansion of European colonial power. The Sūfīs, who perceived this as a decline, invariably attributed it to religious failings. For them defective adherence to Islam had led to this situation and could only be remedied by going back to the fundamentals of the religion. As a result, movements of renewal and revival (*ihyā'-o-tajdīd*) sprang up worldwide. The very global nature of some of these movements, like the spread of reformed Sūfī orders ('neo-Sufism'), and their very similar objectives suggest that the underlying anxiety was shared within the wider Islamic community. Even though the movements in different countries had their peculiar characteristics produced by local conditions and traditions, their broad objective remained the same, namely to strengthen the Muslim community through strict adherence to Scripture and Law. The general flow in the eighteenth century Indian politics changed the basic assumptions of major Sūfī orders vis-à-vis state and society. The fast shrinking of Mughal dominions, with whose fortunes many Muslim religious classes had identified for centuries, created an unprecedented situation, since it was considered vital by the Sufis to have a temporal authority at the centre to endorse traditional values and Islamic principles.

It may be mentioned that in some cases these trends were not new to the eighteenth century. For instance, although it is true that emphasis on Hadīs became a hallmark of this period, there had been significant contributions made by Indo–Muslim Sūfīs to Hadīs studies even in the preceding centuries. Muhammad Ishaq, a modern scholar, has shown that some of the earliest Sūfīs such as Bahā-ud-dīn Zakariyā of Multan, Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' of Delhi, and Sharf-ud-dīn Yahyā of Maner studied **(p.75)** **(p.76)** Hadīs literature and introduced it in their *khānqāh*s.[15] By the sixteenth century, several *madrasah*s emerged in Agra, Jaunpur, Lucknow, and other places to further the cause of Hadīs learning. One of the best known traditionists was Shaikh 'Abdul Haq Dihlawī (d. 1642), whose training at Mecca determined his future career. His

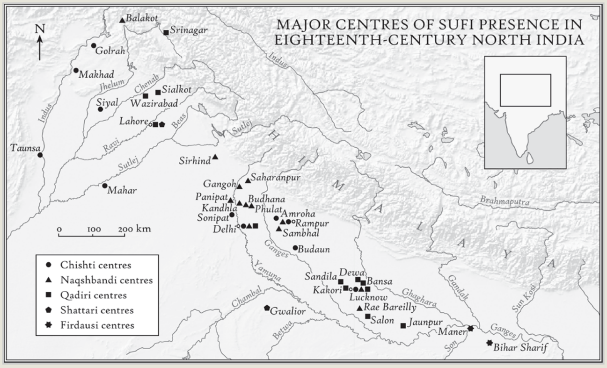
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Khānqāh-i-Qādiriyā at Delhi was a seat of Hadīs learning and housed a rich library of works that he had procured from Arabia.[16] In Deccan, the Bāhmanī Sultanate became a cynosure for Hadīs scholars who came all the way from Egypt and the Hijaz. Indeed, the ports of Gujarat came to be known as *bāb-i-Makkah* (the Gateway to Mecca) because of the frequent contact.[17] With the improvement in Western navigation over the eighteenth century, this contact was bound to increase and with it, the stress on Hadīs learning. In many *khānqāh*s of eighteenth-century Delhi, knowledge of Prophetic traditions came to be considered imperative and was taught as a distinct subject alongside *tasawwuf*.

Trends at the Institutional Level

Sūfī–*‘Ulamā* Linkages

Religious scholars approach Islam from two directions: the ‘outward’ (*zāhir)* and the ‘inward’ (*bātin*). The Qur’ān itself can be understood at different levels of meaning, and it has been explained with different emphasis on the outward (*tafsīr*) and inward (*ta’wīl*) styles of commentary.[18] Based roughly on these distinct emphases, there was an established distinction between exoteric and esoteric approaches. The *‘ulamā* dedicated to the former had often criticized Sūfīs for their free thinking and neglect of the ritual aspects of religion, while the Sūfīs, as champions of esoteric learning, had blamed the *‘ulamā* for excessive formalism and over-intellectualism. The Sūfīs regarded the *‘ulamā* as those who knew merely the verbal expression without knowing or experiencing its **(p.77)** spiritual reality; and considered themselves to be the possessors of true, real religious knowledge, that is, knowledge not empty of spiritual experience. The separate, even contrasting development, on the one hand, of *khānqāh*s (Sūfī lodges and teaching institutions) and, on the other, of *madrasah*s (schools led by *‘ulamā*), which prior to the eighteenth century in India had served dissimilar purposes, illustrates this distinction.[19] The *madrasah*s dealt with the *zāhirī* aspects of Islam; they taught the Sharī‘at as a way of everyday living, and their scholars were regarded as possessors of knowledge (*‘ilm*) transmitted through *isnād*s of Hadīs, as people who looked to the Prophet for outward rules of conduct. On the other hand, the Sūfī *khanqah*s were concerned with the *bātinī* side of Islam and taught the *tarīqat* (way of



Map 2.1 Major Centres of Sūfī Presence in Eighteenth-Century North India

Source: Based on Fozail Ahmad Qadri, ‘Muslim Mystic Trends in India during the Eighteenth Century’, and K. A. Nizami, *Tarikh-i-mashaikh-i-Chisht*, vol. 5. Cartography by Alexander J. Kent.

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spiritual life). They were regarded as possessors of a knowledge acquired through personal, spiritual experience and training (*ma'rifat*), as people who looked to the Prophet for inward grace. While there are points on which the two traditions coincided, they were differently oriented and produced religious leaders and exemplars with different roles in the community. The authority and prestige of the established posts held by the *'ulamā* were too jealously clung to, to permit any compromise with the Sūfī *shaikh*s.[20]

(p.78) Since the early centuries of Islam, individual attempts had been made to reconcile the two approaches to show them as potentially complementary, rather than contradictory. For example, some tried to prove that Sūfī doctrines were not abstruse speculations but a permissible outlet for intellectually gifted Muslims. Imām Ghazālī looked for some continuity of purpose between '*ulamā-i-zāhir* and '*ulamā-i-bātin* by suggesting that the former proceeds from knowledge to action and the latter from action to knowledge.[21] In eighteenth century-India, such attempts at harmonizing the two approaches became recurrent and persistent and the perceived dichotomy between them diminished substantially. Many *'ulamā*, unable to associate themselves with any strong temporal power, turned to mysticism or at least nurtured a sympathetic tolerance for it. The doctrines of Sufism came to be taught in *madrasah*s, while Sūfīs came to respect the superiority of the 'ulamā in matters relating to law. This change was brought about in part by the repercussions of British rule on a religious leadership sustained for centuries on imperial patronage. In the words of Francis Robinson:

> British rule removed 'ulamā from the privileged position in state and society: their revenue-free grants were resumed; their learning was phased out as a requirement for state service; their Sharī'a laws were superceded by Anglo–Muhammadan law in whose working they had no place; their Unāni tibb was replaced by bio-medicine etc. …'.[22]

They were compelled to look for alternate means of support, and alternate means to revive their authority in society. To do this they had to root themselves among the people and find new ways of communicating **(p.79)** and disseminating religious instructions. One of the ways in which they responded was to establish themselves as popular religious guides. For this, a rapprochement with Sūfīs proved helpful, since the latter already had active support from the local masses.

The intermingling of Sūfī and *'ālim* traditions is best represented by the emergence of joint *khānqāh–madrasah*s, with a resulting emphasis among Sūfīs on the study of Hadīs and *fiqh*. There was increasing interaction between *madrasah*s and *khānqāh*s; in many places *'ālim* and Sūfī were housed in the same building, from which they looked after the spiritual and intellectual needs of different sections of Muslim society. Outside India, this trend seems to have begun much earlier. Richard Bulliet draws attention to the establishment of joint

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Sūfī *khānqāh–madrasah* complexes in the eleventh century in the Khurasan region.[23] In North Africa, many *zāwiyās* (small Sūfī establishments) had Qur'ān schools and some even developed into educational establishments where Islamic disciplines were taught. Similarly, the *tomb-khānqāh*s of Central Asia served multiple functions.[24]

In the eighteenth century, three renowned *madrasah*s operated simultaneously in Delhi, and were controlled by leading Sūfī-scholars of the time. The earliest and probably the most well-known was the Madrasah-i-Rahīmia of Shāh 'Abdul Rahīm (d. 1718), which later became associated with his famous son Shāh Walīullāh and grandson Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz. It played a major role in propagating the philosophy of the Walīullāhī school and as a centre for study in exoteric sciences.[25] In this *madrasah*, study of *fiqh*, Hadīs, *tafsīr* (exegesis), *tasawwuf*, and *kalām* (theology) were given equal importance.[26] Besides Shāh Walīullāh, some renowned religious **(p.80)** scholars of the early nineteenth century, such as Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz, Shāh 'Abdul Qādir, Shāh Rafī'-ud-dīn, Qāzī Sanāullāh, Shāh Muhammad Ismā'īl, and Shāh Muhammad Ishāq were the alumni of this *madrasah*. A prominent Chishtī *madrasah* operated at Khānam Bāzār, led by Shāh Kalīmullāh, and another at Ajmerī Gate, headed by another Chishtī Sūfī, Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn.[27] Little is known about Shāh Kalīmullāh's *madrasah*, but we get an indirect reference from Mirzā Mazhar, suggesting that Hadīs was taught there.[28] Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn's *madrasah* gave precedence to the mystic dimensions of Islamic learning but was also noted for the teaching of Hadīs.[29]

The residence of Khwāja Nāsir 'Andalīb, a Naqshbandī Sūfī-poet, at Barāmda kā nāla, served to impart less legalistic and more spiritual training.[30] Mirzā Mazhar, another leading Naqshbandī Sūfī of **(p.81)** eighteenth-century Delhi, was dedicated to both aspects of Islamic learning and busied himself 'in the work of his *khānqāh* and *madrasah*'.[31]

The students who studied at these *madrasah*s became masters of both '*ulūm-i-bātinī* and '*ulūm-i-zāhirī* and helped to bridge the gap between an '*ālim* and a Sūfī. Sūfīs came to recognize the importance of both branches of Islamic learning, although spiritual training continued to have a higher value in their eyes. A student who displayed a greater interest and aptitude for mysticism was given spiritual training, while one who did not, was given training in Islamic Law and Scriptures. Hence, on realizing his mystic potential, Shāh Nūr Muhammad Mahārvī was told by Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn to devote himself to '*ulūm-i-bātinī*.[32]

The main objective of these seminaries was to provide moral purification and religious renewal (*ihyā'*) by concentrating on the scriptures and Islamic sciences. With the introduction of Western education, the system of education was bifurcated into *dīnī* (religious) and *dunyāwī* (temporal/worldly)—all the religious sciences were clubbed together into *dīnī* and the modern education into *dunyāwī*.[33] During the eighteenth century, the *madrasah*s and *khānqāh*s

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emerged as autonomous dispensers of *dīnī ta'līm* (religious education). Insulated from imperialist political and cultural intrusion, they sought to maintain their autonomy in this regard and may thus be seen as 'a cultural resistance to protect the "inner world" from Western intrusion'.[34]

(p.82) *Madrasah*s, like those mentioned above, established an extensive network of pupils and links with the learned families of *qasbah*s in Upper Doab. These contacts proved decisive in spreading their message of reform to a wider audience in rural towns. The local *madrasah*s that dotted the landscape of Upper Doab carried forward the task of disseminating Walīullāhī traditions on a smaller scale, but no less effectively. So successfully did they entrench themselves in rural towns that many *madrasah*s continued to function even after state patronage was withdrawn. The *madrasah*s in the *qasbah*s of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts owed their basic ideals to these high seminaries of Delhi, although they differed in certain respects.[35]

A trend resulting from the joint *khānqāh–madrasah* system was the growing emphasis among Sūfīs on study of the Prophetic traditions and jurisprudence. Students in the *khānqāh*s who learnt the secrets of mysticism were now also taught Islamic scriptures by leading scholars.[36] It was the devotion to the cause of Sharī'at which permitted some Sūfī **(p.83)** orders, especially the Naqshbandīs, to recruit the *'ulamā* to their ranks. As mentioned earlier, direct and growing contact with the Hijaz by sea, superceding the land route via Persia, had significant consequences. The Hijaz was particularly noted for the study of Hadīs and it is not surprising, therefore, that Shāh Walīullāh, on his return from the Hijaz, started teaching the six 'canonical' collections of Hadīs (the *Sahīh*s of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim,* the *Sunan*s of *Abū Daūd, Ibn Mājah, Nasā'i and Tirmizī*) in his *madrasah*.

It was not only the Naqshbandīs who laid stress on Hadīs learning; the Chishtīs also made it a pre-requisite in their mystic discipline. They were now trained by leading Hadīs scholars and received *sanad*s (certificates) from them. To cite some instances, Shāh Kalīmullāh had received *khilāfat* from Shaikh Yahyā Madanī, a renowned *'ālim* and Sūfī of Medina. Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn was taught by leading *'ulamā* such as Miān Muhammad Jān and Maulānā 'Abdul Hakīm, and was often referred to as 'Maulānā' because of his excellence in exoteric sciences.[37] Hadīs collections including *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Sahīh Muslim* and *Mishkāt* were taught in his *madrasah*.[38] Khwāja Nūr Muhammad, his premier *khalīfah*, received a certificate (*sanad*) in Hadīs and was taught *Qutbī* (a work on logic or *mantiq*) by him. So much emphasis was laid on Hadīs studies at Delhi that it came to be known as *Dārul Hadīs* in the eighteenth century.[39] Among the Qādirī Sūfīs, Mullā Nizām-ud-dīn, a disciple of Shāh 'Abdul Razzāq, became a renowned *'ālim* who instituted the *Dars-i-Nizāmī*—a curriculum widely used in Indian *madrasah*s.[40] The trend soon spread to other areas in the nineteenth century. Chishtī Sūfīs of Khānqāh-i-Karīmia at Salon, such as Shāh Muhammad Mahdī

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ʻAtā (d. 1900) and Shāh Muhammad Naʻīm ʻAtā (d. 1966), were recognized as authorities in Hadīs, grammar, prosody, and literature by their contemporaries, even though they had never **(p.84)** ventured outside the four walls of their *khānqāh* for any formal training in these disciplines.[41]

The rapprochement of ʻ*ālim* and Sūfī traditions ensured a wider social appeal for both and gave cohesion to Muslim religious thought. Sūfīs generally stayed in close connection with common people, their *khānqāh*s were open to members of all classes and religions, travellers and visitors, who seldom left unsatisfied. The ʻ*ulamā*, regardless of their social origins, had by their legalistic training become alienated from the spiritual needs of the Muslim masses. It was felt that only by the active collaboration of both traditions could the structural and spiritual aspects of Muslim religious life be revived. Its effects became noticeable in the growing emphasis on adherence to Sharīʻat by Sūfīs, in a campaign to strip mystic thought of many of its customs and ecstatic expressions and in the spread of organizational networks of Sūfī-scholars in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries.

Multiple Affiliations

Besides the rapprochement of Sūfī and ʻ*ālim* traditions, another development brought the different Sūfī orders closer, making their institutions more cohesive. This was the practice of multiple affiliations whereby a person was allowed to be initiated into a number of Sūfī orders at the same time, though his primary connection remained with one Sūfī order. Multiple affiliations not only did away with the distinctions that had kept the Sūfī orders apart but also provided a broader base for them to work in society and penetrate towns hitherto untouched. It imparted greater understanding among different *silsilah*s and also increased their membership in numerical terms. Adherents of the Chishtī order gave up their earlier belief in the principle of ‘hold on to one door and hold it fast’[42] and the rigidities among different Sūfī orders were softened as disciples were allowed to be initiated in as many orders as they required.

The decline of the Mughal Empire created a situation in which the mystic orders were able to overcome their differences: the Suhrawardīs no longer had a strong Muslim power with which they could align; the **(p.85)** Naqshbandī anxiety to establish a true ‘Islamic State’ was being felt in varying degrees by other Sūfī orders; and the Chishtī criticism of rulers came to be more widely accepted.[43] Shāh Walīullāh instructed that one should not distinguish among Sūfīs because of ideological reasons as they differ due to varied mystic experiences and that Sūfīs of various orders should be respected as they were the ‘lovers of the Almighty’.[44] He often quoted his own verse, ‘Our signs are different but Thy beauty is one, and everything points to that beauty’, in support of his position.[45] There were conscious attempts to subdue differences and cohere on a common platform.[46]

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Even before the eighteenth century, there had been Sūfis affiliated to multiple orders,[47] but the process now gained momentum and became fairly widespread. It can be noticed among Sūfis of different orders. Thus, Mirzā Mazhar, besides being a Naqshbandī, was also affiliated to the Qādirī, Chishtī, and Suhrawardī orders. Shāh Walīullāh claimed his connection with almost every Sūfī order.[48] In his work *al-qawl-ul-jamīl*, he describes the paths a Sūfī has to traverse in Qādirī, Chishtī, and Naqshbandī traditions. Among the Chishtīs, Shāh Kalīmullāh received *khilāfat* in the Qādirī, Suhrawardī, and Naqshbandī orders, although he preferred to be known **(p.86)** as a Chishtī.[49] He believed that it was the need of the hour that one should avail oneself of the teachings of whichever order one wished to join. In one of his letters he instructed his disciple to read *Rushhāt-i-Naqshbandiya*, a work frequently referred to at the Naqshbandī *khānqāh*s.[50] He himself initiated people in the Shāzilī, Qādirī, Shattārī, Naqshbandī, Firdausī, and Chishtī orders. Shāh Kalīmullāh's readiness to initiate disciples into the Naqshbandī order attracted a considerable number of Central Asians, among whom the Chishtī order had earlier not been so popular. While Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707) was in the Deccan, his own inclination towards Naqshbandī traditions had created a situation when people began to avoid Chishtī *khānqāh*s. Shāh Kalīmullāh, seeing the problem, instructed Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn, his *khalīfah* at Aurangabad, to initiate people in whichever *silsilah* they wished to join and he was given permission for the Naqshbandī, Suhrawardī, Gazrūnia, Kubrawī, and Shattārī orders.[51] Likewise, at the Qādirī centre in Phulwari Sharif, Shāh Mujībullāh Qādirī received *ijāzat* (certificate) in almost every known mystical order from eminent mystics of his time.[52] In the Phulwari Sharif *khānqāh*, many of the practices followed to this day are essentially those of the Chishtīs.[53]

No doubt, the difficulties of an individual embodying different Sūfī traditions in his life cannot be considered trivial, and the Chishtīs seem to have been aware of it. A random mixing up of the teachings of different orders could create confusion in the spiritual life of the follower and jeopardize his spiritual journey. The Chishtīs took some care to ensure that the teachings of one order not be mixed with those of another in such a way as to disturb one's devotional life.[54]

(p.87) Trends at the Ideological Level

The emergence of 'neo-Sufism' was perhaps the most significant development which influenced many orders in the eighteenth century. 'Neo-Sufism' is an often-used term, coined by Fazlur Rahman, to describe a reforming tendency within Sufism in response to pressure from the 'orthodox'.[55] It became a movement to distinguish a shrine-centred customary Sufism from the one that operated within the parameters of Islamic Law and emphasized Sufism's intellectual doctrines. 'Neo-Sufis' opposed practices that had crept into the spiritual life of Islam over its long co-existence with other faiths. They sought to renew the original self-purifying moral discipline of Sufism at the expense of popular ecstatic Sufism. The beginnings of 'neo-Sufi' consciousness are linked to

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pioneers like Ibn Taimiyya (d. 1327)[56] and his disciple Ibn Qayyim-al Jawziya (d. 1350).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Sūfī reform movements spreading from Morocco to Malaya came to be clubbed together under this term.[57] Following Fazlur Rahman, other scholars have also **(p.88)** used the term extensively in their writings, including J. S. Trimingham, John O. Voll, B.G. Martin, and Ira Lapidus.[58] However, the experiences of reformist Islam differed and the revivalist patterns took different forms in different localities. The term 'neo-Sufism', when used, should be applied to the experiences of a particular order within a defined environment and location. In their critique, O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke have suggested that the term needs to be applied with caution to describe the rich and complex tradition of Sufism and its use should be restricted to the organizational innovations of Sūfī orders.[59]

In eighteenth century-South Asia, some of the features indicative of 'neo-Sufism' existed among the religious elite, but only to a certain extent. For instance, like the 'neo-Sufis', they opposed the shrine-based Sūfī-cults, placed an increasing stress on the study of Hadīs, defended many of their practices in the light of scriptures and, while remaining 'other-worldly', were willing to take active measures to prevent intrusion into their religious spheres. However, the critique of O'Fahey and Radtke stands for the Indian case as well. There was no marked break from early traditions, but only a rethinking and defence of some practices based on varied interpretations of Islam. As will be discussed elsewhere, the Chishtī-Sābrīs in the eighteenth and the first half of nineteenth centuries carried on the core practices of their *silsilah*, remained adherents and defenders of Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy, remained active practitioners of *samā'*, and maintained the close and intimate relationship between *pīr* and *murīd* as before. 'Neo-Sufism' should thus be seen not as the emergence of a new type of spiritual movement but rather as a process of rethinking of Sūfī practices and the defence of them necessitated in the eighteenth century, with the rise of Wahhābism and growing opposition to customary Sufism. Bruce Lawrence has differentiated this trend from **(p.89)** early Sūfī movements not so much on the basis of doctrinal shifts but rather on account of a gradual accommodation—at once complex and local—of the multiple challenges of the colonial order. He includes new trans-regional mobility, new local institutions, new multi-lingual forms of education, and also new print networks as examples of the emergence of 'neo-Sufism'.[60] John Voll also highlights the need to revisit the debate on 'neo-Sufism', particularly the role of Ibn 'Arabī, the rise of vernacular religious literature, and organizational changes in Sūfī orders.[61]

'Neo-Sufism' and the Centrality of Sharī'at

The co-existence of *pīr* and *'ālim* triggered a movement of reform within Sūfī tradition. Sūfīs who now operated alongside *'ulamā* became increasingly conscious of the Sharī'at, of the outer form of religion, and came to share

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concerns similar to those of the *ʻulamā*. Sūfī scholars tried to preserve the inner (*bātinī*) aspect of Islam (rejected outright by puritanical movements) while fully accepting its exoteric (*zāhirī*) aspects and condemning those accretions that they felt had debased the orders. They wrote to highlight the close connection between the way of the Law (Sharīʻat) and the mystic path (*tarīqat*), the deeper meanings and realities of Sūfī practices, and the importance of moulding one's life according to the Sunnat. They tried to embody in their own life-styles the approved models of holiness in Islam and became exemplars of Prophetic piety. The vigorous denunciation of *bidʻat,* shunning unauthorized accretions in mystic life, and adhering to a spiritual discipline closer to the spirit of the Sunnat were other results of this tendency.

However, it should be noted that these developments did not intend to create a new form of Sufism as the term 'neo-Sufism' may imply. The ideas of the so-called 'neo-Sufis' were very similar in spirit and substance to the approach of classical Sūfī theorists. The works of 'Alī Hujwerī, Imām Qushayrī, al-Ghazālī, and others are replete with advice to strictly follow Islamic Law, criticism of intoxication as a mystic state (*hāl*), and **(p.90)** insistence on the interconnection between Sharīʻat, *tarīqat*, and *haqīqat* (truth), among other things.[62]

One similarity in approach can be seen regarding how Sharīʻat, *tarīqat*, and *haqīqat* were considered interconnected. Sūfīs believed in three types of Islamic knowledge: *ʻilm-i-maʻrifat* (knowledge of God), *ʻilm-i-Sharīʻat* (knowledge from God), and *ʻilm-i-tarīqat* (knowledge with God).[63] The first is the result of Divine Guidance, the second is the Sacred Law as revealed, and the third is the knowledge of the 'stations' (*maqāmat*) and 'path' (*tarīqat*) of *sulūk*. They affirmed that *maʻrifat* is unsound without acceptance of the Law (Sharīʻat) and the Law is not practised rightly until the 'stations' are manifested. As Seyyed H. Nasr suggests, Sūfīs viewed Islam as a circle, the centre of which formed the *haqīqat* (Ultimate Truth). Its many radii signify the different *tarīqah*s and the circumference denotes the Sharīʻat. Individual Muslims are like points on the circumference, whose totality constitutes the *ummah* (Muslim community). Thus, to reach the Ultimate Truth (*haqīqat*), one has to stand firm on the circumference (Sharīʻat) and then follow the path (*tarīqat*).[64] Although the privileged knowledge (*maʻrifat*) had always been the leitmotif of a Sūfī's life, Sūfīs argued that such knowledge could not be attained without a proper grounding in religious texts and exoteric learning as imparted by the *ʻulamā*.[65]

'Alī Hujwerī, one of the earliest writers on Sufism, believed that Sharīʻat and *haqīqat* were never divided since 'Law is a branch of the Truth: knowledge of God is Truth and obedience to His command is Law.'[66] He considered it heretical to believe that once Truth is revealed, the Law is abolished, for 'Sharīʻat cannot possibly be maintained without the existence of *haqīqat* and *haqīqat* cannot be

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maintained without the **(p.91)** observance of Sharī‘at … Law without the Truth is ostentation, and the Truth without the Law is hypocrisy.’[67]

In the eighteenth century, Shāh Kalīmullāh wrote in a similar tone about the intimate connection between Sharī‘at, *haqīqat*, and *tarīqat*:

> The pinnacle of *haqīqat* is *tarīqat*, and the apex of *tarīqat* is Sharī‘at. Anyone who keeps his eye on the directives of Sharī‘at will reach the heights of *tarīqat* and *haqīqat*. The sign of attaining the high stages of *haqīqat* is this that daily the *sālik* becomes more firm in following the directions of Sharī‘at.[68]

He thus considered Sharī‘at to be the yardstick for measuring progression or regression on the spiritual path.[69] From his letters it becomes clear that every attempt was made to inculcate these values in his disciples. His advice to anyone who received *khilāfat* was to mould his life according to the Sunnat of the Prophet.[70] He instructed his disciples to embellish their exteriors by Sharī‘at, and their hearts by passion for God (*‘ishq-i-ilāhī*).[71]

The ‘neo-Sufis’ also did not claim to break from the established norms of their predecessors, since doing so would have undermined their authority. Bernd Radtke points out that ‘neo-Sufis’, including Ahmad bin Idrīs (d. 1837), did not make a complete break with the traditional understanding of law, and rightly concludes that the claims to that effect ‘display a lack of understanding of the character and development of classical Sufism which is required before one can proceed to undertake correct historical classification’.[72] What ‘neo-Sufis’ invariably critiqued were customs brought in from other cultures, ideas that had no firm basis in the Qur’ān or Traditions, and those mystics who believed that they had **(p.92)** reached a stage in their journey where they were no longer bound by the injunctions of Sharī‘at.[73]

The ‘neo-Sufis’ made Ibn Taimiyya their guide and followed his footsteps in creating an atmosphere of Sūfī reform. Although historians disagree over the extent of Ibn Taimiyya’s influence on India,[74] the reformers were indeed following the very principles that he had outlined. Shāh Walīullāh, one of the most influential figures of eighteenth century, was deeply influenced by Ibn Taimiyya’s arguments. In his magnum opus *Hujjatullāh al-bāligha* and other works, he at times writes almost verbatim from Ibn Taimiyya. In a letter written to Shaikh Mu‘īn Sindhī, an *‘ālim* of Thatta, he defends Ibn Taimiyya’s position on several issues. In the same letter, he expresses his great admiration for him when he writes:

> There is not a single issue on which he [Ibn Taimiyya] does not have support or evidence from Qur’ān, Sunnat or traditions of Companions [*kitāb-o-sunnat wa āsār-i-salaf*]. It is difficult to find a man of his stature in the entire world and none has the audacity to come close to him in the

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> force of his speech and writing. Those who persecuted and harassed him did not even possess one-tenth of his scholarly excellence.[75]

The adherents of this 'reformed' Sufism criticized the practices and customs of those whom they called *Sūfiya-i-khām* ('false Sūfīs') or *Sūfiya-i-jāhil* ('ignorant Sūfīs'). Those who called themselves Sūfīs but did not possess adequate knowledge of Qur'ān and Traditions were dubbed 'thieves and robbers of religion'.[76] Shāh Walīullāh warned against religious teachers who attracted people to themselves but failed to attract them towards Qur'ān and Sunnat. In a similar tone, Shāh Kalīmullāh censured those Sūfīs who did not follow Sharī'at in their lives as '*mulhid*' (heretical) and instructed his disciples,

> **(p.93)** These infidels who have parted with Sharī'at, who talk like heretics just to fill their stomachs and taunt religious people for being unrealistic, deserve to be punished. Their *tauhīd* [monotheism, belief in the oneness of God] is futile. They are away from the truth. One should not sit in the company of such foolish people.[77]

Another Naqshbandī Sūfī, Nāsir 'Andalīb, declared the state reached by *qurb-ul-farā'iz* (nearness attained through legally prescribed actions) as the much higher kind of nearness, for this was the state of the Prophet (which is higher than that of mystics).[78]

In 'neo-Sufism' there was little place for Sūfī shrines. Mirzā Mazhar instructed his successors in his will that 'unnecessary and unlawful things should be avoided in the last rites after my death' and said that 'a shop should not be erected on my grave for I was far from these things in my life.'[79] Although visiting shrines was not forbidden, the lawfulness of such visits depended on the intention of the doer. Shāh Walīullāh made this clear by stating:

> All those who go to Ajmer or to the tomb of Sālār Mas'ūd or similar places for something they want from there—that is a sin greater than murder or adultery. Is he not like someone who worships hand-made things or like those who called upon al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā?[80] I cannot declare them clearly infidels because there is no text from the Law giver in this peculiar case.[81]

This passage bears striking resemblance to the verdict of a twentieth-century Chishtī Sūfī and scholar, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, on the same issue. He once wrote in a letter,

> **(p.94)** Ignorant and misguided people have vitiated the atmosphere of the shrines of the *buzurgān-i-dīn* [the venerable men of religion]. They indulge in polytheism and deviance from religion, and label those who try to deter them as opponents of the great Sūfīs. Take Ajmer for example: it is the resting place of Hazrat Mu'īn-ud-dīn, a great shaikh who all his life served Islam, preached the unity of God, and intrepidly fought against the infidels.

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> At the present time his devotees and those who claim to adore him are sunk in *shirk* [polytheism] and *bid'at*. These so-called devotees and followers of the Shaikh [Mu'īn-ud-din Chishtī] have turned the shrine into a playhouse and a centre of evil and sinful activities [*fisq-o-fujūr*]. Fear of God has vanished from their hearts […]. These misguided people also bring a bad name to the great Sūfīs. Not to speak of the common lot, even educated people are tending to become involved in such polytheistic and heretical activities.[82]

Thus in the eighteenth century, religious scholars and *shaikh*s put increasing emphasis on Sharī'at as the yardstick for the acceptability of any action. But doing so, they did not claim to break with their past; rather they were building upon the rich traditions of classical Sūfī scholars. Special attention was given in Sūfī literature to emphasize the close connections that Sufism has with Islamic Law and Traditions. While this trend was the result of the close networking of 'ulamā and Sūfīs, multiple affiliations led to new changes in the outlook of Sūfī orders and brought them to a common platform.

Adjustment in Sūfī Thought and Relations among the Sūfī Orders

The intermingling of Sūfī orders promoted respect and understanding among them and provided a platform from which a mystic could comprehend and appreciate the teachings of other *silsilah*s. The extent of this accommodativeness can be gauged by studying the views of different Sūfī orders on some of the more contentious matters such as *samā'* assemblies and adherence to the *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* doctrine.

The Issue Relating to Sūfī Audition Assemblies

Samā' performances have been the most popular expression of mystical experience and at the same time the most contentious practice in Sufism. **(p.95)** *Samā'* (literally, hearing, audition) occasionally involved the use of musical instruments and *raqs* (rhythmic bodily movements). It was a major target of criticism by the *'ulamā* and also a cause of differences among the Sūfī orders. There were occasions when the 'ulamā had tried to ban the custom with the support of rulers.[83] While the *'ulamā* had looked down on the use of musical instruments and rhythmical movements in religious devotional acts, some Sūfī orders like the Naqshbandīs followed suit. The defenders of *samā'* were invariably the Chishtīs, who saw in it spiritual nourishment and an outlet for religious emotions.

Bruce Lawrence has examined how *samā'* was discussed and its parameters defined in medieval *tazkirah*s and *malfūzāt*. According to him, the primary concerns regarding *samā'* were: a) whether 'listening to music' and 'dancing movement' (*raqs*) were genuine expressions of mystical states or a form of delectation and sensual pleasure; b) in case of those Sūfī *shaikh*s who permitted *samā'* for the elect few, what was the minimal acceptable threshold that Sūfī

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aspirants should attain prior to participating in *samā'*; c) the guidelines for the conduct of *samā'* gatherings and the manners (*ādāb*) required of participants; and d) the issue of ecstasy (*wajd*).[84]

The classical Sūfī theorists, with the above concerns in mind, evolved certain rules and manners (*ādāb*) for *samā'* and for those who were permitted to take part. It was imperative for any listener to follow these manners.[85] Since *samā'* was considered to be a specialized Sūfī practice it was commended only for those 'whose hearts had been purified and passions sublimated by mystical discipline'. Novices were often disallowed from attending such assemblies and ecstatic movements were not considered **(p.96)** an integral part of listening to *samā'*, but were allowed if they were not wilfully induced.[86] *Samā'* had to be performed under the guidance of a spiritual master, at a place cleared of common people (*'awām*), the singer had to be a respectable person by listening to whom hearts should not deviate towards worldly thoughts, and during the *samā'* all artificial effort (*takalluf*) was to be put aside. It was also to be performed not too often so its reverence could be maintained.[87]

In the eighteenth century, Chishtī supporters of *samā'* emphasized that it encourages contemplation and serves a higher devotional purpose. Instead of its outward form, importance should be given to its inner meaning and spiritual purpose, namely to help contemplation of God and escape from materialistic worldliness. Shāh Kalīmullāh, though fond of music and *samā'*, discouraged it, believing that mystics of his time did not understand its real significance.[88] He recommended it only to learned and elect disciples and on occasions preferred *murāqaba* (meditation) over *samā'a*.[89] His successor Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn believed that *samā'* should be maintained as authorized by early Chishtī masters, and he permitted it only if done according to Chishtī traditions—if its purpose was known **(p.97)** and if the listener's knowledge (*'ilm*) was preponderant over his feelings (*hāl*)—so that the listener could remain within the boundaries of Divine commandments and prohibitions.[90] The *samā'* was thus considered neither good nor bad but something to be judged by its results. This closely reflects the view of an early Sūfī, Zun Nūn Misrī (d. 861), who believed that *samā'* is a 'divine influence (*wārid-ul-haq*) which stirs the heart to seek God', but added, 'those who listen to it spiritually (*ba-haq*) attain unto God, and those who listen to it sensually (*ba-nafs*) fall into heresy'.[91]

The use of music in such gatherings had also been a key point of contention between Sūfī orders.[92] Those who enjoyed music in their assemblies were quick to argue that their listening was not to incite lusts and passions, but for higher spiritual ends.[93] While the Chishtīs favoured it, the more 'orthodox' orders such as the Naqshabandīs had disallowed it. In the eighteenth century, however, the Naqshbandīs softened their criticism and in fact some of the well-known Naqshbandī leaders of Delhi enjoyed listening to *samā'*, considering it helpful at times to overcome spiritual stagnation. Mirzā Mazhar thus used to say,

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‘Whenever the Chishtī influences increase in me, I am attracted towards *samā‘*.’[94] He did not involve himself in any controversy about the lawfulness of *samā‘*. For him, *samā‘* was of two types. In the first type which he considered lawful, a person sings beautiful verses with an amazing voice at a particular place which results in sorrow or joy. The second type, he claimed, had been **(p. 98)** created by ‘later extremists’ with unnecessary acts (like music and dancing), which were unlawful.[95] Shāh Walīullāh too permitted *samā‘*, but did not allow music to be used in *samā‘* assemblies. Mīr Dard, although a follower of the Mujaddidī order which had generally opposed the practice, was inclined towards *samā‘* and offered a defence of it in his work *Hurmat-i-ghinā*. He studied works on classical Indian music and sang Indian *rāgs* and *rāginīs*. He often gathered singers who performed for him in a prescribed, strict discipline, without any dancing movements.[96] Mīr Dard defends his position, saying:

> My *samā‘* is from God, and God is witness that the singers come of their own accord and sing whenever they want; not that I would call them and would consider it a sort of worship when I listen to them, as others do; but I do not refuse such an act. However, I do not do it myself, and my creed is that of my masters [Naqshbandī *silsilah*]. But since I am imprisoned in this affliction according to the Divine Assent what can I do?[97]

The atmosphere of accommodativeness relating to *samā‘* is well illustrated by the fact that whereas in the seventeenth century a Naqshbandī Sūfī, Khwāja Muhammad Ma‘sūm (d. 1668), is said to have urged Aurangzeb to forbid music and *samā‘*,[98] a century later the foremost Naqshbandī leader Shāh Walīullāh did not hesitate to organize a *samā‘* at his *madrasah* in honour of Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn.[99] It is also important to mark the mutual sensitivity to differences in approach to the issue: a letter written to a disciple of Shāh Kalīmullāh in the Deccan instructs him to refrain from **(p.99)** *samā‘* as long as Naqshbandī mystics returning from hajj were staying there.[100]

To summarize: what becomes noticeable in the eighteenth century is that while the Naqshbandīs tried to accept the audition assemblies, if performed in a sober fashion, the Chishtīs reiterated the regulations put in place by classical Sūfī theorists and made sure that the practice remained within the confines of rules and manners generally agreed upon. The intermingling of Sūfī orders played a vital role in bringing about this rapprochement. As Chishtīs and Naqshbandīs were increasingly enrolled in both orders, the former not only became more aware of the Naqshbandī viewpoints on these issues but also appreciated them and tried to reformulate their own attitude accordingly.

Conflict and Reconciliation between the Sūfī Concepts of Tauhīd

On *tauhīd* or Oneness of God, two theories were current in the Sūfī cirles: Ibn ‘Arabī’s doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* and Ahmad Sirhindī’s doctrine of *wahdat-ush-shuhūd*. In India, Naqshbandīs had mostly accepted the *shuhūdī* proposition

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and had upheld Sirhindī's criticism against *wujūdī* Sūfīs. However, in spite of the opposition to *wujūdī* ideas brewing in seventeenth century-India, these ideas remained widely popular, especially in Chishtī circles. Sūfīs under the influence of *wujūdī* ideas often strove to reconcile their spiritual understanding with those of Hindus. Shāh Muhibbullāh, in whom the Chishtīs found their greatest defender against the Naqshbandī attacks on Ibn 'Arabī, wrote extensively on the doctrine. His works, particularly the *Taswiya*, intensified the conflict in the seventeenth century.

The dispute sparked off by the works of 'Alā-ud-daula Simnānī in Persia and Ahmad Sirhindī in India had attracted the attention of scholars in the Hijaz, Transoxiana, and Turkey;[101] even a French traveller to India, Francois Bernier, did not fail to notice it.[102] The accommodating approach inherent in *wujūdī* doctrines cost Dārā Shikoh his life, and Emperor Aurangzeb, under the influence of Naqshbandīs, strove to restrict the spread of such ideas. There was also a growing opposition **(p.100)** to the Persianate traditions of the Chishtī and Qādirī orders that seemed to tolerate ideas considered by many to be repugnant to orthodox Islam.

The situation changed in the eighteenth century. With the intermingling of Sūfī *silsilah*s, Sūfīs sought to bury their differences with debates on the two philosophies being toned down. Although the reformers and Naqshbandīs continued to denounce *wujūdī* Sufism, the polemical severity of the denunciations lessened over time and debates gradually subsided into the background. The Chishtīs, for their part, remained active adherents of *wujūdī* Sufism, but agreed not to discuss the doctrine openly and with every novice on the mystic path. They understood that open discussion of such intricate mystical topics was responsible for rousing the *'ulamā* against Sufism. Even a staunch supporter of *wujūdī* philosophy, such as Shāh Muhibullāh, had accepted that *wujūdī* ideas are very often misunderstood and can be appreciated only by the select few.[103] It is noteworthy that most works written on *wahdat-ul-wujūd* during the eighteenth century and even earlier were invariably in Arabic, not in Persian or Urdu. This is explained by a desire not to over-popularize the doctrine for fear of its being misunderstood and criticized. The secrets of *wujūdī* philosophy were to be revealed in symbolic language and if the student found it difficult to apprehend, then the subject was to be dropped.[104] Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn had once thought of writing a commentary on *wahdat-ul-wujūd* but later gave up the idea, thinking that people would not grasp its true meaning and start criticizing its commentator.[105] His successor Nūr Muhammad Mahārvī also believed that the earlier proponents of *wujūdī* ideas had suffered because they had advocated them too openly.[106]

It was Shāh Walīullāh who, through his interpretation of the two doctrines, enabled an ideological co-existence between the Chishtī and Naqshbandī positions. He urged Sūfīs to avoid this time-worn argument and tried to show

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that in different words both ideologies are emphasizing the insignificance of the contingent and the perfection of the necessary being.[107] A modern scholar, Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, **(p.101)** writes that the greatest achievement of Shāh Walīullāh in this field was that all discussions after his synthesis of the doctrines were carried on in a sober and subdued manner and debates in the form of divisive controversy were never again revived.[108] To start with, Shāh Walīullāh accepted the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, but avoided the error, regarding the transcendence of God, that he believed the followers of Ibn ʻArabī had fallen into. Instead, he incorporated the transcendental insight of Sirhindī into the *wujūdī* system of Ibn ʻArabī. He called his theosophy *wahdat-ul-wujūd* of the *hakīm* (ʻphilosopher Sūfīʼ), to distinguish it from that of other Sūfīs.[109]

After Shāh Walīullāh, a noticeable change can be seen in the attitude of the Naqshbandī leadership in Delhi towards *wujūdī* ideas. Although works continued to be written in favour of one or the other doctrine, the debate never reached the polemical levels of the previous century. Regarding Ibn ʻArabī, Mirzā Mazhar wrote in a letter:

> The bigots have written many a treatise in the condemnation of Shaikh-i-Akbar [Ibn ʻArabī] […]. The rejection of *tauhīd-i-wujūdī* by Mujaddid [Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī] is not like the rejection of it by the ʻ*ulamā-i-zāhir*. Contrary to [the latter], he affirms and upholds as true the stage which the followers of the principle of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, have in view. But he holds that the ultimate stage is still higher […].[110]

He thus disagreed with the ʻ*ulamā* who criticized Ibn ʻArabī or his doctrines and pointed out that even a critic like Sirhindī did not reject the *wujūdī* doctrine in that way. In another letter, he clarified the controversial sections of Mujaddidʼs letters which had roused much criticism in the preceding century. In it, he showed a more accommodating approach to controversial mystic ideas and argued that a Sūfīʼs life and utterances should be judged according to the Qurʼān and Sunnat:

> **(p.102)** […] The right thing to do is first of all to examine the character and antecedents of the person who makes [unfamiliar statements]. If he follows the Qurʼān and the Sunnat, and his speech and actions when weighed on the scales of Sharīʻat turn out to be correct, his allegorical statements should be interpreted in the light of his unambiguous statements, or left to God, considering the person who made them was beyond help. Sometimes when the Sūfīs are overpowered by ecstasy words fail them, and often thoughts and ideas are so intermixed with the Sufic revelations [*kashf*] that they seem palpably wrong. As a mujtahid is not accused for making errors of judgement, the Sūfī who makes statements which seem wrong should also be excused for his utterances. Sometimes, lack of adequate knowledge of Sufic terminology also raises [difficulties].

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> In these circumstances it is imperative that no objections be raised against Sūfīs, especially against an outstanding sage such as the Mujaddid whose teachings are based on the Sunnat. The main reason for the agitation against the Mujaddid is that since the days of Muhī-ud-dīn Ibn ʻArabī upto the time of the Mujaddid, the people's minds have been so preoccupied with the ideas of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* [that they are not ready to listen to any other theory]. In fact the Mujaddid's basis for the refutation of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* differs radically from that of the ʻulamā, for the Mujaddid is in agreement with the basics of the *wujūdī* theories. The only difference is that according to [the Mujaddid] the true spiritual goal is higher than what is imagined by the followers of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*. To the Mujaddid, it is impossible to identify the Divine Essence with the creation, as is done by the *wujūdīs*.[111]

A similar attitude can be seen in the works of other Naqshbandīs as well. Nāsir ʻAndalīb avoided any discussion on these differences though he supported *shuhūdī* ideas. His successor Mīr Dard had a firm conviction that perfect Sūfīs do not make any distinction between the two doctrines and those who blame the *wujūdī* supporters for associating the created beings with God are ignorant of the way Sūfīs view Reality.[112] To avoid this controversy, Dard substituted for the word '*wujūd*' the word '*nūr*' (light), on the ground that the former does not occur in the Qur'ān or in Hadīs collections.[113]

The Naqshbandīs also realized that *wujūdī* ideas had sunk such deep roots in Indo–Muslim Sufism that they could not be stamped out. In **(p.103)** the eighteenth century *wujūdī* philosophy continued to be used in prose and poetry. Shāh Kalīmullāh's *Sawā-us-sabīl* refutes *shuhūdī* doctrines and Shāh Niāz Ahmad's poetry clearly shows the influence of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*.[114] The discourses of the eighteenth century show that Chishtīs were eager to defend and bring out the true purport of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, while Naqshbandīs agreed not to speak against Ibn ʻArabī and his philosophy in an outright manner. The works written from both sides reveal that the debate was now primarily academic in style and tone, not polemical. Thus, Mīr Dard agreed that both philosophies intended to achieve one and the same result—to liberate the heart and soul from the bondage of *mā-siwa-Allāh* (what is not God).[115] But at the same time he argued that these ideas do not descend from the Prophet and, consequently, he urged Sūfīs to follow *tauhīd-i-Muhammadī*. He explains his position by declaring:

> God is a witness, I have no intention of opposing either one of the two groups; but my aim is to reform and support the followers of the two paths and to resolve the futile controversy and contradiction, because the perfect men belonging to both the paths have been auliyā'-Allāh [Friends of God,

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> Sūfīs]. This is the essence of my investigation and I do not intend to associate myself with either of the two sects.[116]

Attempt to reconcile the two theories continued vigorously throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Shāh Muhammad Ismāʻīl (d. 1831) wrote *ʻAbaqāt*[117] with this objective, and Saiyid Ahmad also made a contribution towards settling the controversy. While disapproving a constant discussion on *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, he did not denounce the doctrine in its entirety.[118] Later, Hājī Imdādullāh wrote *Risāla wahdat-* ***(p.104)*** *ul-wujūd* and Maulānā Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī expounded a conciliatory approach in his *al-Tambīh al-tarbīh fi tanzīh Ibn ʻArabī*.[119] Some of the *ʻulamā* also contributed to the dialogue. Maulānā Fazl-i-Haq (d. 1856) of Khairabad, regarded as the *Imām-i-falsafah* and a premier philosopher of the Khairābādī School of Philosophy in India, also wrote a treatise in this connection.[120]

Relations among Sūfi Orders

Although Sūfī scholars differed ideologically, upheld different mystic philosophies, and had different views on ritual practices, it is noteworthy that their relations remained more or less cordial during the eighteenth century. This was particularly true for the religious leadership in Delhi. Shāh Walīullāh's synthesis of the *wujūdī* and *shuhūdī* doctrines was rejected by Mirzā Mazhar, Khwāja ʻAndalīb, and Mīr Dard. Mirzā Mazhar, a firm believer in *wahdat-ush-shuhūd*, instructed his disciple Maulvī Ghulām Yahyā to write a rejoinder titled *Kalimāt-ul-haq*, refuting Shāh Walīullāh's arguments.[121] About the same time, Shāh Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, son of Shāh Walīullāh, wrote *Damgh-ul-bātil* as a rebuttal of Ghulām Yāhyā's work.[122] In spite of these differences, Mirzā Mazhar had a great admiration for Shāh Walīullāh's interpretation of the moral and religious values of Islam and his rank as a mystic. He once declared:

> Hazrat Shāh Walīullāh Muhaddis has given a novel explanation of *tarīqat* and is an authority on *maʻrifat* and knows the subtleties of learning. He has all the knowledge that is possessed by the greatest ʻulamā. Like him few have passed among the Sūfīs, who have explained with novelty both exoteric and esoteric knowledge.[123]

(p.105) In a letter, Shāh Walīullāh reiterated this gesture by writing:

> There is none equal to Mazhar either in Delhi or in any other city in the country. One who has a desire to attain spiritual perfection must go to Mazhar.[124]

To cite a couple more instances: Shāh Fākhir (d. 1751), a Chishtī Sūfī from Allahabad and a firm believer in *wujūdī* philosophy, was respected by Mirzā Mazhar, who is reported to have said: 'although I consider myself better than many elects of the day, yet I feel humbled before Shāh Fakhīr.'[125] Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn, who is known to have led the funeral prayer over Mirzā Mazhar,[126] had

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cordial relations with Shāh Walīullāh, though they differed ideologically. Shāh Walīullāh used to organize *samā'* in Madrasah-i-Rahīmia in his honour, and when Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn desired music to accompany the *samā'*, the venue was shifted to a nearby house.[127] In order to avoid a clash with the Naqshbandīs and the *'ulamā*, Shāh Kalīmullāh once instructed his disciple Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn, who practised *zikr-i-jahr* (loud *zikr*) in the company of 200–300 disciples in a mosque, to stop doing so as 'the *'ulamā* stress that performance of supererogatory prayer is superior to that of *zikr-i-jahr*, and if a crowd indulges in the latter in a mosque, the supererogatory prayers of other people are disturbed'.[128] This mutual respect among the Sūfīs became a hallmark of eighteenth-century Indian Sufism.

The eighteenth century thus stands out in the history of Indo–Muslim mysticism as a period of growing closeness among Sūfī orders, resulting in a better understanding and appreciation of each other's mystic heritage and a concomitant rapprochement at ideological and institutional levels. The uncertain and volatile political situation led both *'ulamā* and Sūfīs to reconsider their differences and come to a common platform. For the *'ulamā*, the Mughal Empire and successor states had provided patronage through revenue-free grants, through appointment to posts and *mansab*s of importance, through positions such as *qāzī*s, *sadr*s, **(p.106)** *imām*s, and teachers among others, and generally by upholding a system which guaranteed that their leadership remained effective and enduring. The disruption of this support naturally created the need to look for alternate means to maintain the leadership of their own class. From the Sūfīs, the break-up of the Mughal Empire elicited varied responses depending on the extent of their involvement with political power.[129] While the Naqshbandīs were more involved in politics and were closer to the *'ulamā* in their attitude towards political structures, the Chishtīs (with some exceptions) had consistently remained aloof from the court, disliked receiving grants, and preferred to lead a life in which they did not have to depend on anyone for worldly requirements. However, they too viewed religion and politics as inter-related and their actions were at times closely related to the political situation. Political upheavals were seen as the result of one's actions (*a'māl*) and 'moral corruption'. For them, the morals of the society determined the form of government and thus there was always a sense of moral responsibility to put things right. This view was well-entrenched in Sūfī thought and continued well into the nineteenth century, until the last hopes for any near revival of **(p.107)** Muslim political power appeared unrealistic.[130] It was partly because of this view that the religious leaders insisted on providing *nasīhat* (moral counselling) and both *'ulamā* and Sūfīs emerged as moral tutors for their followers. They were eager to maintain the political superiority of Muslim dynasties, which could secure the enforcement of religious law and also buttress their own position as religious leaders.[131]

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The Expanding Role of a Sufi Shaikh

These trends created a new perception of Sufism and redefined the role and position of a Sūfī master in his community, notably as spiritual leader and social reformer. In his religious role, a Sūfī master was now more of a 'directing and teaching' *shaikh*, whose function was not to mediate between disciple and God, but to guide the disciple to draw him closer to God. Sūfīs and *'ulamā* took up the task of defending traditional religious learning, and *madrasah*s with strong local roots were set up to revive the traditional sciences. These *madrasah*s ensured a continuous support for religious leadership and served to establish and sustain contact with the masses. Later, with the introduction of lithographic printing, they **(p.108)** discovered new ways of expanding their constituency and spreading their views. As well as providing spiritual training, a *shaikh* was also expected to be a 'saviour and a guide' of his disciple's worldly affairs. Their assistance was sought in everyday matters, including illness, family problems, financial difficulties, education, or recommendations. In fact, as Claudia Liebeskind suggested, only those orders that were responsive to these needs succeeded in being relevant to their followers.[132] Letter collections of the period cover a wide range of issues and some are indeed of a personal nature.[133] A very common piece of advice is that disciples should write regularly to their mentors about their spiritual and material needs. The following reflection of Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn is a telling statement of the expanding role of Sūfīs in this period:

> Different people come to me with different intentions and purposes. Some come to me believing that I am an '*ālim*, others consider me a Sūfī, and some understand me as an alchemist [*kīmiyāgar*], while other people like to meet me because of my disposition. There are also those who come here with concerns about their actions and with worries regarding '*aurād*' [daily round of prayer formulae]. Hence, I treat them according to their expectations and confidence in me.[134]

Though not the primary motive, missionary purpose (*tablīgh*) can also be seen in some of the Sūfī master's letters. Shāh Kalīmullāh repeatedly urged his disciples to spread the 'Word of God' (*kalimāt-ul-Ḥaq*/*kalimātullāh*) as he believed this to be the work of the prophets (*kār-i-buzurg*), which would earn the pleasure of God.[135] He wrote to a disciple:

> **(p.109)** Strive so that the sceptre of Islam should become wide and the number of the praisers of God abundant. Prosperity in the world will not help one to be forgiven in the world to come. Strive to divert the attention of the worldly people to the world to come.[136]

The effects of these trends can be noticed in other fields as well: more importance was now attached to the ethical values of Sufism and its doctrinal principles. This led to the revival of a doctrine-based Sufism, putting greater emphasis on external law and Hadīs. Sufism was understood as not just an

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assemblage of customary observances but as a way to purify the self (*nafs*) and to perfect morality. For Shāh Kalīmullāh *durveshī* meant suffering the trials and tribulations of people and being persevering and patient with them.[137] His mission was to lead people toward worldly and religious good (*faiz*) and to sacrifice his own peace and comfort to theirs.[138] At a time when religious polemics were rampant, he advised a *khalīfah*:

> Leaving them all to their work and, following the policy of *sulh-i-kul* ['peace to all'], you should devote yourself to the people whatever comes to you.[139]

Mirzā Mazhar once advised Qāzī Sanāullāh Pānipatī that if he was too brutally frank in his criticism and upheld the Law in such a way as to offend people, then he was failing the mystic path and the teachings of his *pīr*s.[140]

(p.110) Rather than solitary retreat, living among the people and working for their moral uplift was considered the best form of worship. Shāh Kalīmullāh advised Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn to settle near Burhanpur because 'it is the place by which people of Hindustān and the Deccan travel to and fro and it is also a place through which the pilgrims going to hajj pass and most of the dervishes reside in the city'.[141] There was a planned expansion of Sūfī networks in suburban centres around Delhi. Disciples came from varied strata of society, irrespective of creed, religion, or status, and in fact any person looking for spiritual solace was welcomed at the *khānqāh*s, particularly those of the Chishtīs. Shāh Kalīmullāh writes:

> Ours and your [Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn's] work is not to collect *tankās* [coins], cash and goods; rather, our aim is to collect hearts. So that we may collect the hearts of the genuine and real lovers from the distant and neighbouring parts of the world. What is manifest in my eye, I should inculcate in them. It may have an effect on any one of them.[142]

The author of *Māsir-ul-kirām* praised Shāh Kalīmullāh for addressing the problems of both the rich and poor sections of society.[143] Shāh Kalīmullāh, in a letter written to Shāh Nizāmuddīn, which came to be known as '*dastūr-ul-'amal*' ('Rules of Conduct'), advises that the more people visit, the more one should thank God and regard their visits as a blessing from the Almighty.[144]

Thus, during the eighteenth century the challenges faced by many traditional South Asian Sūfī orders in the new socio-political circumstances created fresh opportunities and incentives for them. Their role was no longer restricted to providing spiritual solace; rather, along with the *'ulamā*, they found themselves teaching in *madrasah*s, addressing **(p.111)** a wider audience, supervising a dispersed *murīd* community, involving themselves in political matters—albeit indirectly, and at the same time deploying their spiritual traditions through new forms of expression. These trends greatly affected the development of the Chishtī-Sābrī order as well. The reformist messages of the Walīullāhī legatees

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spread in the nearby suburban areas through intricate and sprawling spiritual networks and through affiliated *khānqāh*s and *madrasah*s, and influenced the more localized Sūfī orders. Many trends noted in the Delhi leadership of the eighteenth century became hallmarks of the Chishtī-Sābrī order under the leadership of Hājī Imdādullāh in the century that followed.

Notes:

([1]) At those Sufi institutions operating in rural areas unaffected by the reformist trends, the pluralist elements of late medieval Sufism continued, though not without a strict condemnation from the higher echelons of Sufism. Some refused to be cowed by the reformist pressure and continued their 'unreformed' customs while others chose to revise their practices to avoid criticism. For instance, see the varied responses of the Sufi establishments in Awadh during this period by C. Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (New Delhi, 1998); and Muzaffar Alam, 'Religion and Politics in Awadh Society: 17th and Early 18th c.', in *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds) A. Dallapicola and Stephanie Zingel-Ave (Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 321–49.

([2]) Zameeruddin Siddiqui, 'The Resurgence of the Chishti Silsilah in the Punjab during the Eighteenth Century' *Proceedings of Indian History Congress* 1 (1970), pp. 408–12.

([3]) K. A. Nizamī, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht* (Karachi, 2007), vol. 5, p. 202.

([4]) Hājī Najm-ud-dīn, *Manāqib-ul-mahbūbīn* (Rampur, AH 1312), pp. 105–6; also see Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 5, p. 203.

([5]) Khwāja Kāmgār Khān, *Ahsan-ush-shamā'il* (MS Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh), fol. 67a; also: Najm-ud-dīn, *Manāqib-ul-mahbūbīn*, p. 47.

([6]) Khwāja Nāsir 'Andalīb was the *khalīfah* of Khwāja Muhammad Zubair (d. 1740) and connected through him to the Mujaddidī branch of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi. He was also the founder of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia (not to be confused with the movement of Saiyid Ahmad) and his work *Nālā-i-'andalīb* inspired his son and successor Mīr Dard, a famous Sufi writer and poet who popularized his father's *silsilah* mainly through his writings: Khwāja Mīr Dard, *Dard-i-dil* (Bhopal, AH 1310), p. 188. For a study of his mystical thought, see Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (Bombay, 1959); and A. Schimmel, *Pain and Grace: A Study of Two Mystical Writers of Eighteenth Century Muslim India* (Leiden, 1976).

([7]) Hamid Algar, 'A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order', in *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, (eds) M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic, and T. Zarcone (Istanbul, 1990), p. 25.

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([8]) Even in the late seventeenth century, two disciples of Khwāja Ma‘sūm (d. 1668, a descendant of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī), Jar Allāh Jurjānī (d. 1704) and Murād al-Bukhārī (d. 1720), spread the order in Mecca and in Damascus and Istanbul respectively. Murād’s travels covered the Hijaz, Bukhara, Samarqand, Balkh, Baghdad, and Cairo. He finally settled in Damascus in 1669, where he left a permanent Naqshbandi presence. For details on the transnational expansion of the Naqshbandi order, see Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London and New York, 2007).

([9]) John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Boulder, 1982), p. 54.

([10]) For details on this order, see Algar, ‘A Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order’, pp. 3–44 and David Damrel, ‘The Spread of Naqshbandi Political Thought in the Islamic World’, in *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation*, (eds) Gaborieau, Popovic, and Zarcone, pp. 269–87; see also: Albert Hourani, ‘Shaikh Khalid and the Naqshbandi Order’ in *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, (eds) S. M. Stern, A. Hourani, and V. Brown (South Carolina, 1973), pp. 89–103.

([11]) According to the account of one of his disciples, ‘Abdul Ra’ūf, people flocked to his *khānqāh* from ‘Samarqand, Bukhara, Ghazni, Tashkent, Hisar, Qandahar, Kabul, Peshawar, Multan, Kashmir, Lahore, Sirhind, Amroha, Sambhal, Bareilly, Rampur Lucknow, Jais, Bahraich, Gorakhpur, Azimabad, Dacca, Bengal, Hyderabad and Pune’: Ra’ūf Ahmad Mujaddidī, *Durr-ul-ma‘arif* (Bareilly, AH 1304), as cited in S. A. A. Rizvi, *Shah Abd al Aziz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad* (Canberra, 1982), pp. 549–50.

([12]) Mujaddidī, *Durr-ul-ma‘arif*, pp. 56, 107, 125; Shāh ‘Abdul Ghanī, *Zamīma maqāmāt-i-mazharī* (Delhi, AH 1309), p. 3; the list of his disciples is given by Muhammad Umar in his *Islam in Northern India During the Eighteenth Century* (Delhi, 1993), p. 90, based on *Zamīma maqāmāt-i-mazharī* and Ghulām Sarwar’s *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā’*. See also: Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān, *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, (ed.) Khaliq Anjum (New Delhi, 1990), vol. 2, p. 17.

([13]) Saiyid Ahmad showered high praise on the Shāh and referred to his *khānqāh* activities in his *Āsār-us-sanādīd*. See Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī’s account in *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, pp. 15–21.

([14]) Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857–1964* (London, 1967), p. 2.

([15]) Muhammad Ishaq, *India’s Contribution to the Study of Hadith Literature* (Dacca, 1955), pp. 51–79.

([16]) Ishaq, *India’s Contribution to the Study*, pp. 146–54.

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([17]) Ishaq, *India's Contribution to the Study*, pp. 81; for Deccan's contribution to Hadis studies, see pp. 101–7.

([18]) Seyyed H. Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York, 2004), p. 26.

([19]) This distinction is also indicated in the term *'ulamā-o-mashā'ikh*, and by the designation *'ulamā-i-ākhirat* (scholars of the hereafter, i.e., mystics) and *'ulamā-i-duniā* (this-worldly scholars), found frequently in medieval sources.

([20]) There are perhaps two reasons for this. Firstly, the virtual monopoly of the *'ulamā* as recipients of state benefits could be threatened by the authority of the Sufi masters. Amīr Hasan Sijzī, the compiler of the famous *malfūzāt* of Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā', held that by virtue of their piety, exemplary life, devotion to God, and service to mankind, the Sufis broke the defences of 'orthodoxy' manned by the 'state-sponsored' *'ulamā*: *Fawā'id-ul-fu'ād* (Lucknow, AH 1302), p. 182. Secondly, the spiritual license that Sufism encouraged in its followers was regarded by the *'ulamā* as potentially undermining the outward forms of religious practice. They feared that Sufism would encourage people to neglect or deviate from the *zāhirī* aspects of religion and its obligatory rituals. In some of the heterodox sub-orders, such neglect of religious ordinances was serious enough for the *'ulamā* to become hostile to Sufism in general. For instance, an offshoot of the Junaidi order, known as Rifais or Gurzmars, carried maces and inflicted wounds on themselves; an offshoot of the Suhrawardī order, called Jalalis, consumed hashish as well as snakes and scorpions, and they allowed sexual promiscuity to their leader; a number of Muslim mystic sects (developed mainly outside India) believed in metempsychosis. Some Sufis, whom Eaton calls Sufis of 'narcotic exhilaration', had nothing to do with the mystic movement proper, but were 'libertines, free-lancers who exploited mysticism to attract public attention'. See K. A. Nizami's review [*Islamic Culture* 53, no. 4 (1979)] of Eaton's *Sufis of Bijapur, 1300–1700: Social Rules of Sufis in Medieval India* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 257–61. At other times, conflict with the *'ulamā* arose over certain Sufi rituals such as *samā'*, *'urs*, pilgrimages to shrines, veneration of *pīr*s, and other such practices. The *'ulamā* also vehemently opposed practices adopted, as they believed, from Hindu yogis.

([21]) K. A. Nizami, *Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (Delhi, 2002), p. 57.

([22]) Francis Robinson, 'Ulama of South Asia from 1800 to the mid-Twentieth Century', in his *Islam, South Asia, and the West* (Delhi, 2007), p. 59.

([23]) One of the many examples is the *Madrasah-i-Qushayrī* in Nishapur founded in 1001, which earlier had served as the *madrasah* of Qushayri's teacher Abū 'Alī

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Daqqāq. See Richard Bulliet, *The Patricians of Nishapur: A Study in Medieval Islamic Social History* (Cambridge: Mass., 1972), p. 250, Appendix 1.

([24]) J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), p. 238.

([25]) S. Abul Hasan ʻAlī Nadwī, *Hindustān kī qadīm islāmī darsgāhen* (Azamgarh, 2008), p. 20. The Madrasah-i-Rahīmia was located outside Delhi Gate and later shifted to a *haveli* (mansion) inside the city. It was razed after the mutiny of 1857: Bashīr-ud-dīn Ahmad, *Wāqiʻāt-i-dār-ul-hukūmat dehlī* (Agra, 1919), vol. 2, pp. 585–6, 173–4.

([26]) For the curriculam, see Umar, *Islam in Northern India*, pp. 284–7. The Madrasah-i-Rahīmia syllabus included several books on *tasawwuf*, while Hadīs, *tafsīr*, and *fiqh* were also prominent. For comparison with the *Dars-i-nizāmī* syllabus, see Francis Robinson, 'Scholarship and Mysticism in Early 18th c. Awadh', in *Islam and Indian Regions*, (eds) A. Dallipicola and S. Zingel-Ave (Stuttgart, 1993), p. 393.

([27]) The *madrasah* of Shāh Kalīmullāh was located in Khanam Bazar outside the Red Fort. See Ahmad, *Wāqiʻāt-i-dār-ul-hukūmat dehlī*, vol. 2, p. 123 for the location of the *bazar*; see also Mirzā Sangīn Beg, *Sair-ul-manāzil*, (ed.) Sharif Husain Qasmi (Delhi, 1982), p. 29. Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn's *madrasah* operated in the *Madrasah-i-Ghāzī-ud-dīn Khān Firoz Jung*: Beg, *Sair-ul-manāzil*, pp. 60–1. It was closed in 1793 for reasons not known with certainty and later its building was incorporated into Delhi College. See Saiyid Ahmad, *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, vol. 1, pp. 288, 354; vol. 3, p. 416; and Ahmad, *Wāqiʻāt-i-dār-ul-hukūmat dehlī*, vol. 2, pp. 562–73. Sir Saiyid praised Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn as a man of learning who left behind a vast collection of rare books: *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, vol. 2, pp. 26–8.

([28]) Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī* (Delhi, 1891–2), p. 19.

([29]) He himself gave instructions in *Sharh-i-sallam-ul-ʻulūm* and *Zāhidain*. Cited in Umar, *Islam in Northern India*, p. 265. A Qādirī Sufi of Lucknow, Shāh ʻAbdul Rahmān also spent some years studying at this *madrasah*: Maulvī Nūrullāh, *Anwār-ul-rahmān* (Lucknow, AH 1287), p. 17.

([30]) After repeated invitations from Aurangzeb's daughter-in-law Mehrparwar Begum during the unsettling years of Nādir Shāh's invasion, a house was built for the family inside the fort walls, which included a mosque, a meditation room, and a large gathering place which remained with Dard's descendants for some time.

([31]) خود را خدمتِ مدرسہ و خانقاہ صرف می کرد Bindraban Das Khushgu, *Safīna-i-khushgū*, (ed.) Shah Muhammad Ata-ul-Rahman (Patna, 1958), p. 302; cited in Umar, *Islam in Northern India*, p. 266. His *madrasah* was also closed after the uprising of 1857. Qāzī Sanāullāh of Panipat, a premier disciple of Mirzā Mazhar and Shāh

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Walīullāh, was a well-known jurist and *ʻālim*. He wrote a commentary on the Qurʾān in 10 volumes, *Tafsīr-i-mazharī*, named after his spiritual master: Naʿīmullāh Bahrāichī, *Bashārāt-i-mazhariyah* (rotograph, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University), fol. 104b.

([32]) Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashāʾikh-i-chisht*, vol.5, p. 217; Najm-ud-dīn, *Manāqib-ul-mahbūbīn*, p. 85.

([33]) See Farhat Hasan, 'Madaris and the Challenges of Modernity in Colonial India', in *Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India post 9/11*, (eds) H. Reifeld and Jan-Peter Hartung (Delhi, 2006), pp. 60–1.

([34]) Hasan, 'Madaris and the Challenges of Modernity in Colonial India'. In the constitution of *Dārul ʻulūm* (Deoband), it is mentioned that

> as long as the madrasah does not have a regular source of income, it will exist; if some permanent source is found, i.e. landed property or a factory, the purpose of the madrasah will be defeated … The participation of government and wealthy people in madrasah affairs is harmful … Donations of anonymous persons are blessings; the sincerity of these persons is the permanent source of income.

Muhammad Tayyab, *Hālāt-i- dārul ʻulūm deoband* (Deoband, 1965), pp. 17–18. Dissociation from the rich and royalty had been the watchword for many Sufi orders and it is noteworthy that the *ʻulamā* who had always been closely associated with the rulers came to hold a similar view.

([35]) The local institutions were more inclusive in their character, had firm roots and links in society, and served purposes relating to everyday life, namely marriage, Sharīʻat issues, education of the poor, law-giving, and even providing medical treatment through *Yūnānī* medicine. Occasionally these *madrasah*s received patronage from the Mughal emperor or local governors. The *Madrasah-i-Sandila* founded by a Qādirī leader Maulvī Hamdullāh (d. 1747) was patronized by Emperor Muhammad Shāh, who granted a few villages for the expenses of students. See Maulvī Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, (Urdu transl.) M. Ayyub Qadiri (Karachi, 1961), p. 169. This *madrasah* operated until 1808.

([36]) This tendency seems to have begun early. When Emperor Aurangzeb ordered the compilation of *Fatāwa-i-ʻĀlamgīrī*, nearly four out of its twelve compilers had *Shaikh* prefixed to their names and belonged to the category of Sufis: Muhammad Shafī, 'Fatāwa-i-ʻĀlamgīrī aur uske muʾallifīn', *Zamīma Oriental College Magazine* (August– November, 1953), pp. 25–42. In the list is included the renowned mystic Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm, the father of Shāh Walīullāh.

([37]) The former taught him *Fusūs-ul-hikam*, *Shams-i-bāzigha*, and *Sadra*, and the latter taught *Hidāyah*: Khwāja Gul Muhammad, *Takmilah Siyar-ul-auliyā'* (Delhi,

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AH 1312), pp. 106–7; Ghāzī-ud-dīn Khān, *Manāqib-i-fakhriyah* (Delhi, AH 1315), p. 10; Najm-ud-dīn, *Manāqib-ul-mahbūbīn*, p. 49.

([38]) Nūr-ud-dīn Husain Fakhrī, *Fakhr-ut-tālibīn* (Delhi, 1315 AH), pp. 15–16.

([39]) Ahmad, *Wāqi'āt-i-dār-ul-hukūmat dehlī*, vol. 2, p. 586.

([40]) For details, see Muhammad Rizā Ansārī, *Bānī Dars-i-Nizāmī* (Aligarh, 1973).

([41]) Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri, 'Religious Plurality in the Chishti Tradition: A Case Study of the Khanqah at Salon in Awadh', in *Religious Pluralism in South Asia and Europe*, (eds) Jamal Malik and Helmut Reifeld (Delhi, 2005), p. 79.

([42]) یکدر گیرید ومحکم گیرید Sijzī, *Fawā'id-ul-fu'ād*, p. 47.

([43]) F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints: Muslim Response to the British Presence in Delhi and the Upper Doab, 1803–1857' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1983), p. 86.

([44]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya* (Delhi, 1910), vol. 2, p. 35.

([45]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, vol. 2, p. 94.

([46]) Nehemia Levtzion has offered an alternate view. He suggests that prior to the eighteenth century, Sufis were initiated into several orders. But reformists such as Mustafā Bakrī (d. 1749), who inspired reform in the Khalwatiyya order of Egypt, demanded that his disciples should withdraw allegiances from all other orders. Levtzion writes, 'Exclusivity gave a greater cohesion to a *tariqa* and added to the commitment of its adherents'. He notices that the Tijaniyya, an offshoot of the Khalwatiyya, was even more exclusive. Therefore, he suggests that multiple intitation came to an end in the eighteenth century, when Sufi orders became more exclusive and competitive: Nehemia Levtzion, 'The Dynamics of Sufi Brotherhoods', in *The Public Sphere in Muslim Societies*, (eds) Miriam Hoexter, S. Eisenstadt, and N. Levtzion (Albany, 2002), p. 114.

([47]) For instance, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī joined the Qādirī order under Shāh Kamāl. His father Shaikh 'Abdul Ahad trained him in the Chishtī *silsilah*. Later he joined the Naqshbandī order under Khwāja Bāqī Billāh.

([48]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Al Intibāh fi salāsil auliyā' allāh*, (Urdu transl.) Mian Aziz Ahmad and Sufi M. Faruq (Karachi, AH 1344), p. 41.

([49]) His own sons were initiated into the Qādirī order: Gul Muhammad, *Takmilah siyar-ul-auliyā'*, p. 51.

([50]) Shāh Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī* (Delhi, AH 1301), letter no. 99, p. 91.

([51]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 11, pp. 21–2.

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([52]) Shoaib Rizvī, *Ayān-i-watan* (Patna, 1953), pp. 131, 133–51; Abul Hayāt Qādirī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām* (Lucknow, 1920), pp. 81–190.

([53]) Rizvi, *Ayān-i-watan*, pp. 221–2; as cited in F. A. Qadri, 'Muslim Mystic Trends in India During the Eighteenth Century' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Aligarh Muslim University, 1987), p. 61, 88n.

([54]) For this reason, Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn was not always in favour of multiple initiations and used to say,

کمال مرد ہمیں است کہ در یک مذہب یا در یک روش در چیزے کہ بیاید داد او را بدہد، و شے دوم را در

آں مخلوط نکند

Fakhrī, *Fakhr-ut-tālibīn*, p. 12, 159; Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 5, pp. 11–12.

([55]) Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago, 2002), p. 195.

([56]) Ibn Taimiyya was the leading Islamic thinker and an incisive critic of many Sufi doctrines and practices, who in his several works defined the parameters of an Islamic Sufism. For his impact on the Indian subcontinent, see K. A. Nizami, 'The Impact of Ibn Taimiyya on South Asia', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1990), pp. 120–49; J. M. S. Baljon, *Religion and Thought of Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi, 1703–1762* (Leiden, 1986), pp. 200–1. For a different view, see Riazul Islam, *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society* (Karachi, 2002), pp. 292–5. For Ibn Taimiyya's critique of Sufism, see Abdul Haq Ansari, 'Ibn Taymiyah's Criticism of Sufism', *Islam and the Modern Age* 15, no. 3 (1984), pp. 147–56. For Ibn Taimiyya as a Sufi, see G. Makdisi, 'Ibn Taimiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order', *American Journal of Arabic Studies*, 1, (1973), pp. 118–29; and the critique thereof: Thomas Michel, 'Ibn Taymiyya's *Sharh* on the *Futuh al-Ghayb* of Abd al Qadir al Jilani', *Hamdard Islamicus* 4, no. 2 (1981), pp. 3–12.

([57]) This movement of Sufi reform was in no way restricted to the Indian subcontinent in the eighteenth century. The situation in India—described as a 'cultural failure' of the ruling classes—was shared by the entire Islamic world during this period. The Tijaniyya order of Ahmad al-Tijānī (d. 1815) in Morocco, the Daqawiyya order of Abū Hāmid Daqāwī (d. 1823), the Sanusi Brotherhood of Muhammad Ibn al-Sānūsī (d. 1859) in North Africa, and the Idrisi order of Ahmad ibn Idrīs (d. 1837) in Arabia were similar politico-religious movements, each claiming to have based its practices solidly on the Qur'ān and the Sunnat.

([58]) Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*; Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*; B.G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976); Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*

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(Cambridge, 1988); N. Levtzion and John O. Voll (eds), *Eighteenth Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, 1987).

([59]) For a criticism of the application of this term to the Idrisi, Sanusi, and Tijaniya Sufi movements of Africa, see R. S. O'Fahey and Bernd Radtke, 'Neo-Sufism Reconsidered', *Der Islam* 70, no. 1 (1993), pp. 52–87; and Bernd Radtke, 'Ijtihad and Neo Sufism', *Asiatische Studien Etudes Asiatiques* 48, no. 3 (1994), pp. 909–21.

([60]) Bruce Lawrence, '*Sufism and neo-Sufism*', in Robert W. Hefner (ed.), *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Muslims and Modernity*, vol. 6 (New York, 2010), p. 358.

([61]) John O. Voll, 'Neo-Sufism: Reconsidered Again', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 42, nos. 2–3 (2008), pp. 324–8.

([62]) A teacher of 'Alī Hujwerī, Abul Fazl Muhammad Hasan al-Khuttali told him, 'Intoxication is the playground of children, but sobriety is the death field of men': 'Alī Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjūb* (English transl.) R. A. Nicholson (Delhi, 1982), p. 186.

([63]) Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, p. 16.

([64]) Nasr, *The Heart of Islam*, p. 60.

([65]) As 'Alī Hujwerī puts it, 'Rejection of the Law (Sharī'at) is heresy, and rejection of the Truth (*marifat*) is infidelity and polytheism': Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, p. 139.

([66]) Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul- mahjūb*, p. 140.

([67]) Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul- mahjūb*, pp. 383–4; an interesting anecdote narrated by Hujwerī makes this point clear. Abū Yazīd Bustāmī went to meet a man reputed to be a *walī* who lived in another town, where he saw him spit on the floor of the mosque. He turned back and said to himself, 'A saint must keep the religious law in order that God may keep him in his spiritual state (*hāl*). Had this man [truly] been a *walī* his respect for the mosque would have prevented him from spitting on the floor…': Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul- mahjūb*, pp. 217–18.

([68]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 110, p. 85.

([69]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter nos. 95, p. 83; and 125.

([70]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 96, p. 85.

([71]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 128, p. 104.

([72]) Radtke, 'Ijtihad and Neo Sufism', p. 920.

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([73]) At times described as *be-Shar'a* or 'lawless' Sufis.

([74]) Nizami, 'The Impact of Ibn Taimiyya on South Asia', pp. 120–49. For a different view, see Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, pp. 292–5.

([75]) Muhammad Manzūr Numanī, 'Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taymiyya aur Hāfiz Ibn Qayyim, Hazrat Shāh Walīullāh aur akābir jamā'at-i-deoband kī nazar mein' *al-Furqān* 40 (1972), p. 26; see also Nizami, 'Impact of Ibn Taimiyya on South Asia', pp. 136–7.

([76]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, vol. 2, p. 202.

([77]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 110, p. 96.

([78]) Nāsir 'Andalīb, *Nālā-i-'andalīb* (Bhopal, AH 1310), vol. 1, p. 272. At another place he writes,

و آں از شرع محمدی یابی کوشش تا ملک سرمدی یابی

(Strive to find the everlasting kingdom and that you will find by the Law of Muhammad): 'Andalīb, *Nālā-i-'andalīb*, vol. 2, p. 791.

([79]) Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt* (Muradabad, 1891), p. 95; Na'īmullāh Bahrāichī, *Ma'mūlāt-i-mazharī* (Kanpur, AH 1275), p. 114.

([80]) Pre-Islamic Arab deities revered by the Arabs as daughters of God. See Qur'ān, 53, pp. 19–20.

([81]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, vol. 2, p. 35.

([82]) Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Malfūzāt-i-Hakīm-ul-ummat* (Multan, AH 1423), vol. 4, p. 21. As translated by Islam, *Sufism in South Asia*, p. 463.

([83]) We hear of two '*mahzars*' (meetings to discuss religious questions) held to debate the legality of *samā'* during the reigns of Iltūtmish and Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughlaq. For the debate in Iltūtmish's time, see 'Abdul Malik 'Isāmī, *Futūh-us-salātīn*, (ed.) A. S. Usha (Madras, 1948), pp. 117–20. For the discussion during Ghiyās-ud-dīn's reign, see Amīr Khurd, *Siyar-ul-auliyā'* (Delhi, AH 1302), pp. 527–31.

([84]) Bruce Lawrence, 'The Early Chishti Approach to Sama', in *Islamic Society and Culture*, (eds) Milton Israel and N. K. Wagle (Delhi, 1983), pp. 69–93.

([85]) The eighteenth-century Naqshbandi poet Mīr Dard is reported to have rebuked the Mughal Emperor Shāh 'Ālam II for stretching out his legs while attending a *samā'*, a posture that was against the prescribed etiquette (*adab*): Schimmel, *Pain and Grace*, p. 39.

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([86]) Hujwerī [*Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, pp. 416–20] wrote:

> Dancing [*raqs*] has no foundation in the religious law [of Islam] or in the path [of Sufism] […]. But since ecstatic movements and the practices of those who endeavour to induce ecstasy [*ahl-i-tawajud*] resemble it, some frivolous imitators have indulged in it immoderately and have made it a religion. I have met with a number of common people [*awam*] who adopted Sūfism in the belief that it is this [dancing] and nothing more […]. [Actually] it is a state that cannot be explained in words: 'without experience no knowledge'[…]. It is more desirable that beginners [*mubtadi*] should not be allowed to attend musical concerts lest their natures become depraved.

([87]) Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjūb*, p. 419.

([88]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 103, p. 93; similar advice was given to 'Alī Hujwerī by one of his teachers:

> A time will come when the music [*samā'*] will be no more to you than the croaking of a raven. The influence of music only lasts so long as there is no contemplation, and as soon as contemplation is attained music has no power. Take care not to accustom yourself to this lest it grow part of your nature and keep you back from higher things.

Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul- mahjūb*, p. 171.

([89]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter nos. 12, 13, 97, 99, and 103.

([90]) Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 5, p. 136.

([91]) Hujwerī, *Kashf-ul-mahjub*, p. 404. In a similar way, 'Alī Hujwerī likened *samā'* auditions to the sun which has the capacity to affect things differently: it can burn, illumine, dissolve, or nurture. He writes [*Kashf-ul- mahjūb*, p. 406]:

> Thus, whatever is heard by penitents augments their contrition and remorse; whatever is heard by longing lovers increases their longing for vision; whatever is heard by those who have certain faith confirms their certainty; whatever is heard by novices verifies their elucidation [of matters which perplex them]; whatever is heard by lovers impels them to cut off all worldly connections; and whatever is heard by the spiritually poor forms a foundation for hopelessness.

([92]) There had been notable exceptions even among the Chishtīs over the use of musical instruments in audition assemblies. Both Nasīr-ud-dīn Chirāgh and Saiyid Gesū Darāz had disallowed them in *samā'*.

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([93]) Mīr Dard affirms that his listening to music was not to satisfy his passions. See his *Nālā-i-Dard* (Bhopal, AH 1310), p. 7, and *Aah-i-sard*, p. 77.

([94]) Ghulām ʻAlī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī*, p. 28.

([95]) Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, p. 35; Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' had discussed four kinds of *samāʻ*: *halāl* (fully permissible), *harām* (unlawful), *makrūh* (permitted, but with distaste), and *mubāh* (allowable). His discussion was based on the orientation of listeners, their age, moral quality, the contents of the verses being sung, and other such factors: Khurd, *Siyar-ul-auliyā'*, pp. 491–2.

([96]) Cited in A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), p. 185.

([97]) Mīr Dard, *Nālā-i-Dard*, Nālā no. 38; as cited in Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 380.

([98]) Muhammad Hāshim Kishmī, *Zubdat-ul- maqāmāt* (Lucknow, AH 1307), pp. 381–2; Ghulām Sarwar, *Khazīnat-ul-āsfiyā'*, pp. 639–42; Rahmān ʻAlī, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, p. 470.

([99]) Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz, *Malfūzāt-i-Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz*, (ed.) Qāzī Bashīr-ud-Dīn, (Meerut, AH 1314), pp. 55–6.

([100]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 49, p. 55.

([101]) Rizvi, *A History of Sufism in India* (Delhi, 1978), vol. 2, ch. 6.

([102]) F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, (ed.) Archibald Constable (Delhi, 1968), pp. 345–8.

([103]) Alam, 'Religion and Politics in Awadh Society, p. 328.

([104]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 96, pp. 85–6.

([105]) Fakhrī, *Fakhr-ut-tālibīn*, p. 39.

([106]) Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol. 5, p. 224.

([107]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Faislat-ul wahdat-ul-wujūd wa'l shuhūd* (Delhi, AH 1324/AD 1906), p. 7.

([108]) Burhan Ahmad Faruqi, *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid* (Delhi, 1970), p. 144.

([109]) Abdul Haq Ansari, 'Shah Waliy Allah Attempts to Revise Wahdat al Wujud', Arabica 35 (1988), p. 201.

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([110]) Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, letter no. 5, pp. 18–19; Ghulām ʻAlī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī*, letter no. 5, pp. 92–3; see letter numbers 3 and 6 in *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt* and 19 in *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī* for Mirzā Mazhar's views on the two doctrines.

([111]) Ghulām ʻAlī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī*, letter no. 5.

([112]) Mīr Dard, *ʻIlm-ul-kitāb* (Delhi, AH 1308), p. 106.

([113]) Dard, *ʻIlm-ul-kitāb*, p. 107.

([114]) Nizami, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht*, vol.1, p. 408. For instance:

تو میں اسکو دھوکہ گماں دیکھتا ہوں اگر کوئ جانے جہاں غیر حق ہے

کہ اک بہر ہستی رواں دیکھتا ہوں یہ جو کچھ کہ پیدا ہے سب عین حق ہے

([115]) Dard, *ʻIlm-ul-kitāb*, p. 184.

([116]) Dard, *ʻIlm-ul-kitāb*, p. 615.

([117]) Shāh Muhammad Ismāʻīl, *Abaqāt* (Karachi, 1960); Maulvī Ghulām Yahyā, *Kalimāt-ul-haq* (MS Nadwat-ul-ulama Library, Lucknow); Shāh Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, *Damgh-ul-bātil* (MS Bankipur Library, Patna).

([118]) See Abdul Bari, 'A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1953), pp. 210–12.

([119]) Hājī Imdādullāh, *Risāla wahdat-ul-wujūd*, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Waqar Ali bin Mukhtar Ali (Deoband, n.d), pp. 208–17; Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī, *Al-tambīh al-tarbīh fi' tanzīh Ibn ʻArabī* (Thanabhawan, AH 1346).

([120]) Faruqi, *The Mujaddid's Conception of Tawhid*, p. 114, n.1. For biographical details, see Rahmān ʻAli, *Tazkirah-i-ʻulamā-i-hind*, pp. 382–4; Faqīr Muhammad Jhelamī, *Hadā'iq-ul-hanafiya* (Lucknow, 1866), p. 480.

([121]) Shāh Walīullāh, *Faislat-ul wahdat-ul-wujūd wa'l shuhūd*, p. 7; Shāh Walīullāh, *Tafhīmāt-i-Ilāhiya*, vol. 2, pp. 56–7, 261–71. Yahyā, *Kalimāt-ul-haq*.

([122]) Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, *Damgh-ul-bātil*.

([123]) Muhammad Abul Khair (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, pp. 83–4.

([124]) Ghulām ʻAlī, *Maqāmāt-i-mazharī*, p. 30; Bahrāichī, *Maʻmūlāt-i-mazharī*, p. 133. Some letters are also available in Muhammad Abul Khair (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, letter nos. 1–4.

([125]) Ghulām ʻAlī Āzād Bilgrāmī, *Maʻāsir-ul-kirām* (Lahore, 1913), vol. 2, p. 218.

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([126]) Ghāzī-ud-dīn Khān, *Manāqib-i-fakhriyah*, p. 11.

([127]) Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz, *Malfuzāt-i-Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz*, pp. 55–6.

([128]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter nos. 6 and 99, pp. 13 and 90.

([129]) The Sufis of the eighteenth century were largely unperturbed by the presence of the British until the political occupation of North India began, and they became apprehensive of the growing power of '*firangīs*'. There is very little mention of British officers in their correspondences until the last quarter of the eighteenth century and most attention is paid to rebuilding the Mughal Empire under a just ruler who should govern according to the Islamic Law. One early reference comes from the post-Buxar period (1764) when Shāh Ahlullāh wrote to his nephew Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz: 'And the news that the "firangi-kafirs" have defeated the army of Shuja-ud-Daula deeply grieved [us]. We pray to God [for help]. This is the time of calamities and we destitute are weak and honourless. Like the weather worms, whoever comes tramples us under his feet.' Cited in F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints', p. 156. Mirzā Mazhar was also grieved by the death of his disciple Mīr Kallū at the hands of 'firangis' and the desolation of Amroha. He once wrote to his disciple Qāzī Sanāullāh about the expected arrival of Miān Muhammad Qāsim with a 'firangi' named 'Baholer' (Buehler): Mirzā Mazhar, *Makātīb-i-MirzāMazhar* (ed.) Abdul Razzaq Quraishi, (Urdu transl.) Muhammad Umar (Bombay, 1966), letter nos. 127 and 117. Apart from such infrequent references, it seems that both Shāh Walīullāh and Mirzā Mazhar were mostly engrossed in internal politics and considered Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats as a greater challenge at the time.

([130]) The Chishtīs believed in the dictum, 'As you are, so shall be your rulers': Hāmid Qalandar, *Khair-ul- majālis*, (ed.) K. A. Nizami (Aligarh, 1959), p. 52. Even a nineteenth-century Chishtī Sufi, Shaikh Muhammad Sulaimān of Taunsa (d. 1850), declared that 'your actions are your rulers'. Cited in K. A. Nizami, 'Early Indo-Muslim Mystics and Their Attitude towards the State', *Islamic Culture* (1948–50), p. 68. This view prevailed among the Naqshbandīs also. Shāh Abul Khair (d. 1923), a successor of Mīrza Mazhar, lamented while reorganizing the Delhi *khānqāh*: 'Nowadays the Muslims are afflicted with trouble. This is all the result of our bad actions [*bad aʻmālī*]. The impact of this is such that I cannot explain it […]'. Cited in Warren Fusfeld, 'Naqshbandi Sufism and Reformist Islam', *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 18, nos. 3–4 (1983), p. 249.

([131]) Most Sufis from the time of Shāh Walīullāh were critical of the existing Mughal system, and looked to bring about a 'reformed' Mughal rule. Their political objective was the re-establishment of a 'Muslim State' according to their definition of it; one in which *zāhirī khilāfat* (outer caliphate) and *bātinī khilāfat* (inner caliphate) would work simultaneously. *Khilāfat-i-zāhirī* meant taking responsibility for political matters and governing according to Sunnat and

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Sharī'at. *Khilāfat-i-bātinī* meant providing religious instructions and maintaining religious morals in the society. The ideal government was one where both functions could be carried out simultaneously: F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints', p. 156.

([132]) Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees*, p. 4.

([133]) Many of Mīrza Mazhar's letters include recommendations for disciples seeking jobs; others (like those written to Qāzī Sanāullāh of Panipat) are of a personal nature and highlight their intimacy. These letters have been edited and published by A. R. Quraishi (Bombay, 1966) and Khaliq Anjum (Delhi, 1989). See also, Muhammad Abul Khair (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, letter nos. 24, 37, 44, 48, 49, and 50; Ghulam Mustafa Khan (ed.), *Liwā'ih khānqah-i-mazhariya* (Karachi, 1972), letter no. 3, pp. 52–3; Bahrāichī, *Ma'mūlāt-i-mazharī*, p. 110.

([134]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, p. 7.

([135]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter nos., 6, 21, 28, 39, 48, 54, 74, 80, and 115.

([136]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 76, p. 70. This does not mean that conversion was a primary objective for Sufis; rather, they were more concerned to preach the message of Islam to as many people as possible. It was suasion and the force of their personal example that, at times, did win converts. For the attitude of medieval Sufis towards conversion, see Bruce Lawrence, 'Early Indo-Muslim Saints and Conversion', in *Islam in Asia*, (ed.) Yohanan Friedmann (Jerusalem, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 109–45. For a different view, see Raziuddin Aquil, 'Conversion in Chishti Sufi Literature (13th-14th centuries)', *The Indian Historical Review* 24, nos. 1–2, (1997–8), pp. 70–94.

([137]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 5, pp. 11–12. Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā' was known as *tabīb-i-dil* (healer of the heart) and is referred as such by Amir Khusrau.

([138]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 75, p. 69.

([139]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 80, pp. 72–3; Umar, *Islam in Northern India*, p. 55.

([140]) Muhammad Abul Khair (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt*, letter no. 77.

([141]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 61, pp. 61–2.

([142]) Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 34, p. 41.

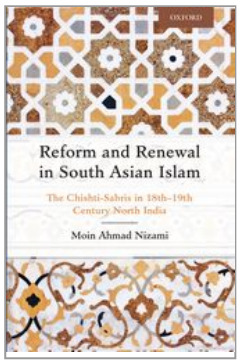
([143]) Bilgrāmī, *Ma'āsir-ul-kirām*, vol. 1 (Agra, 1910) p. 42.

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([144]) However, this did not mean that anybody could become a *khalīfah*. This was considered a post of responsibility and due importance was given to their appointment. The letters of Shāh Kalīmullāh reveal that he had very strict rules for granting *khilāfat*: Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter nos. 18, 39, 47, and 96. His *khalīfah*s were urged not to allow a new disciple to give instructions in mysticism and to grant *khilāfat* only to the learned ones: Kalīmullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-kalīmī*, letter no. 96; Fakhrī, *Fakhr-ut-tālibīn*, pp. 30, 42.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Sābrī Networks in the Qasbahs

Amroha (ca. 1750–1800)

Moin Ahmad Nizami

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter 3 discusses Sufi experiences in the *qasbah* environment of eighteenth century. The town of Amroha was the first major centre of Chishti-Sabri activity in the upper Doab. Drawing mainly from indigenous works such as family histories, biographies, and Sufi discourses, it picks out the role of three Sabri *shaikh*s of Amroha, Shah Azd-ud-din Jafri (d. 1758), Shah Abdul Hadi (d. 1776) and Shah Abdul Bari (d. 1811) to show how their lives epitomised Sufi experience in the rural towns of the region. The chapter also brings out the vibrant diversity and cultural richness of *qasbah*s as centres of Muslim culture. While concentrating on the ideological orientation of these *shaikh*s and elements of continuity and change within the Sufi order, the chapter explains the significance of the shift in the order's centre of activity from Awadh to the Upper Doab.

Keywords: Amroha, qasbahs, Shah Abdul Hadi, Shah Abdul Bari, Sufi networks

Amroha is a small but historically significant town some 125 kms from Delhi, in the district of Muradabad. During the early years of the eighteenth century, it developed into a centre of Chishtī-Sābrī activity primarily due to the efforts of two figures—Shāh Muhammadī Fayyāz (d. 1695) and Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn Jaʻfrī (d. 1758)—both belonging to the lineage of Shāh Muhibbullāh. Their successors at Amroha gradually established connections with the Naqshbandīs and Walīullāhī scholars of Delhi, which led to the beginnings of Sūfī–*ʻālim* integration in the Sābrī order. Studying the lives and experiences of the Sābrī establishment in

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Amroha during the eighteenth century is a way to track this trend to its earliest beginnings, and to take note of the changes that gradually settled in the Sābrī order following its shift from Awadh to the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab.

Socio-cultural Milieu of the *Qasbah*s of Upper Doab

*Qasbah*s, often seen as thriving centres of economic activity under the British Raj, had long served as bastions of Muslim culture. Muslim **(p.113)** settlements had started appearing in the Upper Doab even before the Turkish military campaigns began in the twelfth century. Documents of the later Delhi Sultanate use the term '*qasbah*' ambiguously, but from the sixteenth century the term was distinctively used for township.[1] As the Muslim governments became more stable, these towns started to play the role of military outposts and administrative centres, and emerged as cradles of Muslim culture and civilization.

The term *qasbah* is generally defined as a place with a significant Muslim presence, bigger than a village but smaller than a city. Most of the older dictionaries agree on this definition.[2] The Settlement Reports of the 1860s and '70s frequently refer to *qasbah*s, which are defined as:

> […] a Muslim settlement in a defensible military position, generally in the site of an ancient Hindu headquarters, town or port, where for mutual protection, the Mussalmans who had over-run and seized proprietary rights of the surrounding villages resided, where the *faujdar* and his troops, the pargana *kanungo* and chaudhuri, the *mafti* [*sic.*], the *kazi*, and high dignitaries lived, and as such be the case, where the wealth and power of the Moslem sect was collected in one spot, a large settlement of Syuds [*sic.*], mosques, *dargas* etc. sprung up. As a rule there was but little land attached and that was chiefly planted with fruit groves held free of rent, whilst each man really had a freehold of the yard, i.e. of his house and the land occupied by his servants and followers and so the assertion became fact that each man of note was a zamindar of his holding.[3]

(p.114) *Qasbah*s, far from being insulated micro-societies, were very much alive to the changes that unfolded during the colonial period. Many *ashrāf* families were in constant touch with the emerging seats of learning in the colonial period. As David Lelyveld has pointed out, nearly 54 per cent of the students who went to Aligarh College during the period of 1875–95 came from places 'distantly rural, old fortresses now torn down or small market centres'.[4] Barbara Metcalf also points to the continuous interaction between these townships and seats of Islamic learning, such as Dārul 'ulūm.[5] A number of the students of Delhi College also came from these *qasbah*s and Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī (d. 1851), a famous teacher there, hailed from the small *qasbah* of Nanauta. In a recent study, Raisur Rahman has argued that these *qasbah*s played a prominent role in intellectual dialogue and literary production and that they are

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highly relevant to the ways in which ‘Muslim modernity’ unfolded in colonial India.[6]

Demographic Characteristics[7]

In the Upper Doab region, there were three main districts where the Chishtī-Sābrī order flourished during the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries.[8] Muradabad was the southernmost of them, comprising six *tehsīl*s—Muradabad, Thakurdwara, Bilari, Sambhal, Amroha, and Hasanpur.[9] **(p.115)** To the north, the district of Muzaffarnagar comprised the four *tehsīl*s of Muzaffarnagar, Kairana, Jansath, and Budhana. The northern-most part of Doab was formed by the Saharanpur district, divided into *tehsīl*s of Saharanpur, Deoband, Roorkee, and Nakur.[10] Although the districts had an overall Hindu majority, most of the *qasbah*s where the Chishtī-Sābrī order thrived had a substantial Muslim population. For instance, in 1901, in the town of Amroha, Muslims constituted 73 per cent of the population, in Muradabad 56 per cent, in Sambhal 64 per cent, in Saharanpur 55 per cent, and in other towns like Thanabhawan and Kandhla it was 48 per cent and 47 per cent respectively.[11]

Demographically, *qasbah*s were not one homogenous community but a mix of several sub-communities.[12] Although ‘high-born’ Saiyid and Shaikh families dominated all three districts, there was a considerable population of smaller Muslim groups like *julāhā*s, *barhāī*s, converted Rajputs, *telī*s, and Pathans, among others. The presence of *ajlāf* classes and numerous Hindu sects gave diversity to these towns. We can gauge the extent of this social diversity from the figures available of some of the most populous groups. For instance, in the district of Muradabad (in 1901), the numerically strongest caste of Chamars was only 21.19 per cent of the total Hindu population.[13] Among Muslims, the top four social groups of Saiyids, Gujars, Pathans, and Rajputs made up only 15 per cent of the total Muslim population in Saharanpur district in 1872.

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Table 3.1 Demographic Distribution in Muradabad, Muzaffarnagar, and Saharanpur districts (1853–1901)

District	Total population		% of population		Major social groups (in order of numerical strength)	
	1,85,31,901		Muslim	Hindu	Muslim	Hindu
Muradabad	10,52,248	11,91,993	35	63	Shaikhs, Saiyids, Julahas, Barhais	Chamars, Jats, Rajputs, and Brahmins
Muzaffarnagar	6,72, 861	8,77,188	29	69	Julahas, Shaikhs, Rajputs, Saiyids	Chamars, Jats, Kahars, Brahmins, and Gujars
Saharanpur	8,01,325	10,45,230	33	65	Telis, Julahas, Garas, and Shaikhs	Chamars, Gujars, Rajputs, and Brahmins

Source: **Based on data in H. R. Nevill,** ***District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*****, vols. 2, 3, and 16 (Allahabad, 1903–11).**

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Contributing to the social diversity, there were the various occupational groups, such as *kamāngar*s (bow-makers), *tīrgar*s (arrow-makers), *pajawahgar*s (lime-burners), *mewā-faroshān* (fruit sellers), *sābungar*s (soap makers), **(p.116)** *kāghazī*s (paper makers), *m'imār*s (builders), *julāhā*s (weavers), *qasāī*s (butchers), *ātishbāz* (firework makers), and others. These occupational classes gradually assumed the character of castes among Hindus.[14] A distinguishing feature was a gradual increase of Muslim 'service gentry' as a social group. Prior to the mid-seventeenth century, as noted by C. A. Bayly, the political and military life of these towns revolved mostly around the Muslim courts of bigger cities such as Delhi or Jaunpur. But, as the acquisition of heritable land rights intensified after Akbar's reign, many Muslim Saiyid families emerged as powerful landowners embedded in their localities.[15] While continuing to serve as soldiers and teachers at the **(p.117)** courts of regional rulers, the Mughal Empire, and later, in the lower levels of the British administration, this 'service gentry' retained a strong sense of local identity attached to their *qasbah* homeland (*watan*).[16]

In terms of occupation, the agricultural sector dominated the three districts (in 1901, 62.79 per cent in Muradabad and 44.3 per cent in Saharanpur). It is worth noting, however, that in the Saharanpur district the number of people employed in agriculture was the lowest anywhere in the North-Western provinces, while industrial employment, including handicrafts, textiles, trade, and leatherwork was the highest (20.8 per cent in 1901). After 1869, when the town of Saharanpur was linked by rail network, its importance as a trading centre increased and by 1903 it had a large railway workshop employing 28.65 per cent of the town's population.[17]

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the position of some of the lower social groups improved, primarily because of the enormous land transfers imposed in the three districts. Rent-free grants of land had been virtually a monopoly of the *ashrāf* of Saiyid and Shaikh lineages during much of the eighteenth century. However, land transfers affected these elite classes most adversely in the nineteenth century. The most extensive of such transfers took place during the 1840–60 period in Muzaffarnagar district, which British officials considered a 'hotbed of Wahabeeism'. Due to the uprising in Thanabhawan in 1857, the property of *shaikhzādā*s was confiscated, while in Jhinjhana, the Muslim losses amounted to half of the total area transferred. It appears that throughout the district, transfers were greatest where Muslims had been proprietors. From 1860–90, nearly 60,000 acres of land were transferred, the chief losers being the Muslim classes of Saiyids and Gujars, who between them lost more than half of the total area transferred. Chief gainers in the district were Banias who increased their estates by 38,000 acres, besides Shaikhs, Khatris, and Brahmans who also got some advantage out of these transfers.[18]

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(p.118) The situation in the districts of Muradabad and Saharanpur was also not much different. Prior to British occupation, the largest land-owners in Muradabad district were: Katehri Rajputs and Rohillas in Thakurdwara, Pathans and Shaikhs in Muradabad (city), Saiyids and Vaishnavs in Amroha, and Saiyids, Pathans, Banias, and Tagas in Hasanpur. In the post-1857 period, land transfers affected all these classes, and while Banias, Khatris, Jats, Vaishnavs, and Brahmins improved their position, Saiyids and Rajputs lost heavily.[19] Likewise, in Saharanpur district, compared to the figures of 1866, in 1901 Mahajans had gained 59,053 acres of land and came to hold nearly 22.3 per cent of the total area. In comparison, Shaikhs had gained 2,092 acres and held only 4.86 per cent while Saiyids possessed a mere 2.2 per cent of land holdings.[20] The above figures suggest that in all three districts, Saiyids were the most severely affected by land-transfers. The only area where they continued to hold ground was in the *tehsīl* of Amroha where, even after losing a substantial amount of land, they still possessed 27.26 per cent of land holdings.[21] This was not because they had gained anything from the land transfers, but because Amroha had been a stronghold of the Saiyids that more or less dominated the town for centuries. Indeed, nearly 37 per cent of the Muslim population consisted of *ashrāf* of Saiyid lineage alone.

The development of the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab was a continuous process, starting with the arrival of Muslims in the area and continuing well into the colonial period. *Qasbah*s evolved their distinct corporate identity with their own traditions, history, and legacy, all of which were recorded with pride. Some of the general features, such as the residence of Muslim service gentry with strong local roots, and the presence of markets and craft industries, can also be seen in many towns of Upper Doab. But what distinguished the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab more than others was the significant role played by religious and intellectual families. It was their presence that facilitated the spread of the Chishtī-Sābrī order, and a number of Sūfī *shaikh*s came from well-known families which enjoyed enormous popular support.

(p.119) ## Cultural Characteristics

The history of religious families in the region goes back to the early days of Muslim presence, when the administrative offices of *qāzī* or *muftī* were established to carry out legal and social functions. Some settled in the region after receiving land grants as payment or rewards. These families enjoyed patronage from royal courts and land endowments in the form of *madad-i-maʻāsh* (grant of revenue generally from land) for *khānqāh*s and *madrasah*s. Sūfī families played a conspicuous part in creating a legacy of some of the more historically famous *qasbah*s of the region, such as Amroha, Badaun, and Sambhal.[22] For instance, the families of Shāh Wilāyat (a thirteenth-century Suhrawardī) and Shāh Abban (a sixteenth-century Chishtī) played a major role in defining the cultural history of Amroha.[23] Their descendants not only provided traditional learning and spiritual training; they also filled the ranks of the

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Mughal administration and were settled into *qasbah* society through revenue-free grants.

Similarly, the towns of Kandhla, Nanauta, and Thanabhawan, among others, were home to several '*ulamā* and Sūfī families during the British period.[24] The town of Saharanpur, situated about 100 miles north of **(p.120)** Delhi, is said to have received its name from a fourteenth-century Sūfī, Shāh Haran Chishtī. The family of 'Abdul Quddūs, in Gangoh, retained its popularity and respect for centuries, owing to its religious erudition. Each year these rural towns held several religious gatherings and fairs (*melā*s) in honour of local saints. These local Sūfīs also contributed to the development of a cosmopolitan atmosphere in the *qasbah*s. They provided spiritual solace to disciples and visitors during their lifetime, and after their death their shrines became centres for receiving blessing (*baraka*). These shrines provided to the adherents of different religions a common focus, thereby reducing the scope for conflict between them and improving the cohesiveness and solidarity of *qasbah* society.[25] The local shrines and *khānqāh*s attracted pilgrims who came seeking fulfilment of diverse needs and aspirations: farmers prayed for their crops, barren mothers for children, maidens for suitable husbands, others sought divine blessings or cures for ailments, and so forth.[26] Residents of both Deoband and Amroha held the legendary figure of Sālār Mas'ūd in much esteem, as tradition ascribed to him the earliest conquest of the region. In the small town of Jhinjhana in Muzaffarnagar district, '*urs* celebrations were held for local saints, and in Muharram a fair was held that drew nearly 3,000 people.[27] These fairs, '*urs*, Sūfī shrines, *sarāi*s, along with the innumerable local mosques and *jāmi' masjids*, some dating to the early medieval period, served as reminders to the *qasbah* dwellers of their rich heritage, which was proudly celebrated in local histories and *tazkirah*s. In Jhinjhana, the *ganj-i-shahīdān* reminded its dwellers of the illustrious past of their *watan* (homeland), whose history was also linked with the renowned campaigns of Saiyid Sālār **(p.121)** Mas'ūd.[28] The residents of Jhinjhana revered the shrine of Shāh 'Abdul Razzāq (built during the reign of Jahāngīr), who was remembered as the '*Shāh-ul-'ālamīn*' ('The Shāh of the Worlds'). His family was respected by the residents and his descendants filled the ranks of *qāzīs* in Delhi. The nineteenth-century Chishtī-Sābrī Sūfī Miānjī Nūr Muhammad hailed from this revered Jhinjhana family.

Thus, the *qasbah* was much more than a geographical identity—it was a cultural and religious one with long roots in Perso–Islamic traditions, formed by the 'high born' families (*ashrāf*) educated in Persian and Arabic, with long genealogies, attesting with pride their extra-Indian origins. *Qasbah* residents were proud of their architecture, poetry, literature, and traditions, among other traits.[29] Accounts of the local history and culture praise the uniqueness of the *qasbah*s and emphasize their high moral order and uncomplicated lifestyles. A strong attachment to the homeland (*watan*) was thus characteristic of *qasbah* dwellers. Even the very names of their *qasbah*s were taken with reverence: Hājī

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Imdādullāh (d. 1899), at one place, refers to Jhinjhana as '*jā-i-hudā*' or 'the place of guidance' since his spiritual mentor belonged to that town.[30] Those who lived in cities but retained links with *qasbah*s cherished the desire to live back in their *watan*—indeed the expressed wish to be buried in *qasbah* graveyards was common.[31] The decline in some towns towards the close of the nineteenth century was lamented in local histories and poetry.[32] **(p.122)** By contrast with the life of the *qasbah*, city life was looked down upon as individualistic, competitive, and materialistic.

Amroha: A Case Study of an Ideal 'Muslim' Town

Amroha has received little attention in modern scholarship, though it represented in many ways the ideal *qasbah* society.[33] It was a stronghold of Muslim Saiyid and Shaikh families. Its residents venerated the medieval Sūfī families of Shāh Wilāyat and Shāh Abban. Its numerous *madrasah*s, *khānqāh*s, and heritable land-holdings embodied the strong local commitments of its elites. Local histories highlighted the pride of its residents in their *watan*. More specifically for our concern here, Amroha holds an important place in the history of the Chishtī-Sābrī order: it became the first major centre of activity in Upper Doab in the eighteenth century, from where the order spread further north to Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts.

Historical Significance of Amroha

Records from the Sultanate period suggest that Amroha passed from the hands of Rajputs to become a part of the growing Muslim empire early in the thirteenth century.[34] During the early years of the Delhi **(p.123)** Sultanate, Amroha was included in the fief (*iqta'*) of Badaun (conquered by Aibak in 1197).[35] Ever since the inception of Muslim rule in India, the area remained not only an important military-cum-administrative centre but also a hub of mystic activity.[36] The town served initially as a strategic military outpost, a cantonment, and later its resident families served the Mughal Empire and were given *mansab*s, while its religious classes got Imperial recognition through *madad-i-ma'āsh*. The invasion of Tīmūr towards the end of fourteenth century created more instability in the region.[37] Soon after the Mughal occupation of the region, **(p.124)** Amroha was included in the fief of Sambhal, which was assigned to Prince Humāyun.[38]

S. M. Azizuddin Husain, pointing to the emergence of Sambhal as a strategic military site under the Mughals, suggests that the fortunes of Amroha then declined, especially as the new city of Muradabad rose to prominence and overshadowed both Amroha and Sambhal.[39] But a different picture emerges if we take into consideration the positions held by some of the leading Amroha families in the administrative machinery of the Mughals. Although Sambhal may indeed have surpassed Amroha in strategic importance, there is little evidence to suggest a decline in Amroha itself. In the sixteenth century, Amroha was the largest *parganah* (a territorial unit in Mughal administration for revenue and

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administrative purposes) in the *sarkār* (subdivision of a *sūba*, consisting of several *parganah*s) of Sambhal, having the maximum *jamaʿ dāmī* (assessed revenue in *dām*s, 9.4 per cent) and land grants in the form of *suyūrghāl* (revenue grant, 34 per cent).[40] The learned families of this small town were recipients of *maʿāfī* grants (tax-free grants) under the Delhi Sultans,[41] **(p.125)** but now for the first time, they started to receive posts of importance, *mansab*s, and land grants in the form of *jāgīr*s and *suyūrghāl*.

Two Amroha families were particularly noteworthy in this regard. They made their way into the administrative system and successfully retained their positions for a considerable period. One was the family of Shāh Sharf-ud-dīn Wilāyāt, whose descendants were able to secure and retain their *mansab*s from the time of Akbar (r. 1556–1605), and the other was that of Shāh Abban Badr-i-Chisht, whose family descendants received tax-free *maʿāfī* grants from the Mughal court.[42] The Mughal *mansabdār*s from Amroha numbered almost 200, of whom 116 were from the family and lineage of Shāh Wilāyat alone.

Table 3.2 Distribution of *mansab*s among Amroha Families

Family	Total number of mansabs
Khandan Shah Wilayat	116
Qazi Zadgan	18
Danishmandan	16
Jarodi Sadaat	7
Nogaiyan	6
Siddiqan	7
Pirzadgan (Shah Abban)	6
Kamboh	6
Kulal	6
Khandan-i-Abbasi	1
Nakhshbiyan	12

***Source*: Mahmūd Ahmad Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* (Delhi, 1932), pp. 307–33.**

(p.126) Besides obtaining modest *mansab*s, the leading families of Amroha also received *suyūrghāl* in the form of tax-free land grants (*maʿāfī*) or money (*wazīfah*).[43] Among the *ʿulamā*, there were grants of up to 1,000 bīghās made to residents of Amroha.[44] At times, even the ladies of the Saiyids of Amroha received *maʿāfī* grants. The names of Bībī Khāliq Dī, Bībī Makkī, and Bībī Zainab

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are recorded as getting 100 bīghās of land in Yahyapur for their maintenance during the seventeenth century.[45]

It would thus be wrong to suggest that the fortunes of Amroha declined during the Mughal period. Rather, the *ashrāf* families served the Mughal administration and received due recognition for that. At the time when the Mughal Empire disintegrated, the *ashrāf* families of Amroha held some 700 villages as *jagir*s and *ma'āfī* grants; most of them were concentrated in the *qasbah*s of Amroha, Sambhal, Rajabpur, Azampur, Bachraun, Muradabad, Bijnor, and others. However, land transfers in the eighteenth century changed these figures significantly and by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the number had been reduced to a mere hundred.[46]

Social Composition

Amroha remained a fairly well populated town in British India. The earliest record of its population stood at 72,667 in 1847. It fluctuated over the next fifty years and by the end of the nineteenth century, it was 40,077, with a Muslim majority that accounted for nearly 73 per cent of the total.[47] Amroha was dominated by Saiyids who had been living there **(p.127)** since the time of Shāh Wilāyat and had become the largest land owners. In the Amroha *tehsīl*, even after losing substantial land holdings during the nineteenth century, the Saiyids owned 27.26 per cent of total land, with the Shaikhs next in rank with 17.14 per cent.[48]

The town was divided into various *muhallā*s (localities) inhabited by the Muslim *ashrāf* families. Some of the neighbourhoods were named after the leading families who had resided in them for generations (for instance, the Qāzīzāda *muhallā* got its name from the family of Qāzīzādgāns). *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, an authoritative local history, divides its *ashrāf* families into three distinct categories depending on their ancestral origin—'*Arabī-un-nasl* (Arab lineage), '*Ajamī-un-nasl* (non-Arab lineage), and *Hindī-ul-asl* (native Indian origins).[49] Most Amroha families fell in the category of '*Arabī-un-nasl*, of whom the majority traced their lineage from well-known Sūfīs.[50] Thus we find the descendants of Shāh Sharf-ud-dīn Wilāyat, Shāh Abban Badr-i-Chisht, Saiyid Shāh Nasīr-ud-dīn Chishtī,[51] **(p.128)** and others residing at Amroha. The Nakhshbī family of Amroha links itself to Khwāja Maudūd Chishtī, the Dānishmandān family to Maulānā Saiyid Ashraf Dānishmand, and the Ja'frīs of Amroha trace their lineage to Shāh Muhammadī Fayyāz (a seventeenth-century Sābrī Sūfī). The descendants of Bābā Farīd, calling themselves Farūqīs, also come in the category of '*Arabī-un-nasl*. Among the '*Ajamī-un-nasl* were the families of Mughals, Pathans, and Qizilbashis. Some families, such as the Kamboh and the Shurafa-i-Kalal, were included among the *Hindī-ul-asl*.

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Aside from the social elite, the Muslim population also included the occupational groups (*peshā-var*) like *bāwarchī* (cook), *badhā'i*; (carpenter), *lohār* (ironsmith), *hajjām* (barber), *darzi* (tailor), *mujāwar*s (attendants of shrines and mosques), and many more.[52] As in other *qasbah*s, connections and ancestry were central to societal arrangements in Amroha: family background and genealogy (*nasb*) were important and proudly asserted.[53]

By the end of the nineteenth century, Amroha could boast of some 109 mosques and forty-six *imāmbārā*s.[54] The town's numerous mosques and *madrasah*s were generously funded by the Mughal court and later, during the British period, by the wealthy *ashrāf* families. These families strengthened their public influence by restoring and constructing these institutions in the later colonial period.[55] The *madrasah*s and *khānqāh*s **(p.129)** were richly endowed through *waqf*s, with separate *waqf*s for Sunni and Shī'i institutions.[56] These endowments were used for various purposes, such as the celebration of '*urs*, covering the operating costs of *khānqāh*s and *dargāh*s, maintenance of mosques and *imāmbārā*s, stipends for students, the salaries of *imām*, *mudarris* (teacher), *mu'azzin*, and other officials, and for charitable purposes.

Amroha as a Centre of Mystic Activity

The settlement of Sūfīs in Amroha seems to have taken place soon after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. In the initial years the Suhrawardī order received greater acceptance, but was gradually overshadowed by the Chishtīs. Just as a few noted families of Amroha enjoyed exceptional influence, so too did the Sūfī orders to which they were attached. Most of the Amrohvī Sūfīs owed allegiance to certain Sūfī-families, especially those of Sharf-ud-dīn Wilāyat and Shāh Abban. Their orders (Suhrawardī and Chishtī respectively) were continued by their descendants who remained at Amroha: some accepted *madad-i-ma'āsh* grants in nearby villages, others became *sajjāda nashīn*s (hereditary successors) of ancestral *dargāh*s, still others served the Imperial army during the initial years and later gave up that occupation to lead a life devoted to spiritual development. Family connections with the descendants of Shāh Wilāyat and Shāh 'Abdul Majīd 'Alavī (d. 1636)[57] also helped the Chishtī-Sābrī order to strengthen its base in Amroha.

(p.130) Frequent travels by the Amrohvī Sābrīs meant that, in spite of its locally distinct character, the *qasbah* was not a socially closed, insular, micro-society. Such travels—undertaken in search of a *pīr*, or to gain formal education, or to perform pilgrimage to shrines, or simply to discipline the lower self though the hardships of travel—ensured continual interaction with the outside world and other centres of scholarship.[58] One also finds some contacts with the famed successors of Shāh Walīullāh, whose teachings were increasingly being spread in nearby cities of Sambhal, Bareilly, Basoli, Muradabad, Karnal, Gangoh, Panipat, Lucknow, Badaun, Bijnor, and other places. To cite one example, Shāh 'Abdul Bārī of Amroha (d. 1811) received *khilāfat* from Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān in

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1770, when the latter visited Amroha. The contacts were further strengthened when ʻAbdul Bārī visited the Naqshbandī *khānqāh* in Delhi after Mirzā Mazhar's death and met Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz and Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī, the illustrious heirs of Shāh Walīullāh.[59]

The Chishtī-Sābrīs of Amroha hailed from two families which had settled at Amroha in the seventeenth century. Indeed, it could be said that the history of the Sābrī order in Amroha is largely a history of these two families and their connections.

a) *The family of Shāh ʻĪsā Hargāmī:* Shāh ʻĪsā (d. 1644) of Jaʻfrī lineage was initially a resident of Kurcha (a village near Khairabad in Awadh) but moved to Hargam (a *qasbah* near Khairabad) between 1616 and 1619. He was a popular Sūfī of the region and a disciple of Shāh Kālū Walī of Kurcha.[60] The author of *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn* **(p.131)** mentions him as ʻa man of generosity and piety (*sāhib-i-sakhāwat-o-taqwā*) who spent most of his nights in worship and prayer, used to invite *faqīr*s to his home and whenever he heard that a dervish was residing at some place, would carry food to him and seek his blessings'.[61] To this family belonged Shāh Muhammadī Fayyāz and his nephew Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn Jaʻfrī, who made Amroha their home and laid the foundations of the Chishtī-Sābrī order in this town.

Shāh Muhammadī was born to Shāh ʻĪsā at Kurcha in 1612. The norm for Muslim families with Sūfī leanings was to emphasize spiritual training after the completion of formal education. Accordingly, once his early education in the traditional sciences of Islam (*ʻulūm-i-zāhirī*) was over, Shāh Muhammadī left home in search of a *murshid* and was drawn to the *khānqāh* of Shāh Muhibbullāh at Allahabad. He spent fourteen years under his guidance and acquired so much expertise that Shāh Muhibbullāh reportedly said: 'If Muhibbullāh had not met his *pīr* and had seen Muhammadī with so much knowledge in esoteric and exoteric sciences, he would have become his follower and disciple.'[62] In 1643, Shāh Muhammadī was accorded *khilāfat* and given the *wilāyat* of Agra (Akbarabad), a location that was to engender considerable problems for him later on.[63] In 1662, he decided to settle at Amroha, in an area that came to be known as *Sarāi Muhammadī*.

The other son of Shāh ʻĪsā was Shāh Hāmid Hargāmī (d. 1706), who was born at Hargam in 1620. He too had strong Sūfī leanings and was taught *ʻulūm-zāhirī* by Saiyid ʻAzmatullāh (a student of the famous Hadīs scholar ʻAbdul Haq Muhaddis Dihlawī).[64] Later, he received mystic training from Shāh Muhibbullāh and then from his own brother Shāh Muhammadī. When Shāh Muhammadī settled in Amroha, Shāh Hāmid joined him there. It was at Amroha that Shāh **(p.132)** ʻAzd-ud-dīn Jaʻfrī was born to him in 1667.[65] Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn, after completing education in Persian and Arabic, went to study Hindu mysticism and philosophy from pundits in

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Benaras and Ayodhya.[66] During these years his interests favoured philosophy (*falsafah*), medicine (*tibb*), logic (*mantiq*), astrology (*nujūm*), mathematics (*riyāzī*), and astronomy (*haīyat*). Later, he turned to mysticism and received training from his uncle Shāh Muhammadī.[67] After receiving *khilāfat*, he established his *khānqāh* near the venerated shrine of Shāh Wilāyat in Amroha.

b) *The family of Shaikh Muhammad Hāfiz:* Shaikh Muhammad Hāfiz belonged to the Siddīquī lineage and his ancestors are known to have held posts of *qāzī* and *muftī* during the Sultanate period.[68] His son **(p. 133)** Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī (d. 1776) carried on the Sābrī traditions in Amroha and also laid the foundations of Khānqāh-i-Hādwia, which became the chief institution of the order during the late eighteenth century. It popularized Chishtī-Sābrī traditions in the region and also established contacts with the Delhi Naqshbandīs, thus opening the gates to Sūfi-reform within the order.

Both these families were interconnected through a *pīr–murīd* relationship. Shāh ʻAbdul Hādīʼs parents had close links with Shāh Muhammadī, who used to visit often and, according to the *malfūzāt* **(p.134)** of Shāh Hādī, had prophesied Shāh ʻAbdul Hādīʼs eminence.[69] Moreover, Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī was also a disciple and *khalīfah* of Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn. Very soon the mystic setting in Amroha was dominated, above all others, by the family of Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī.

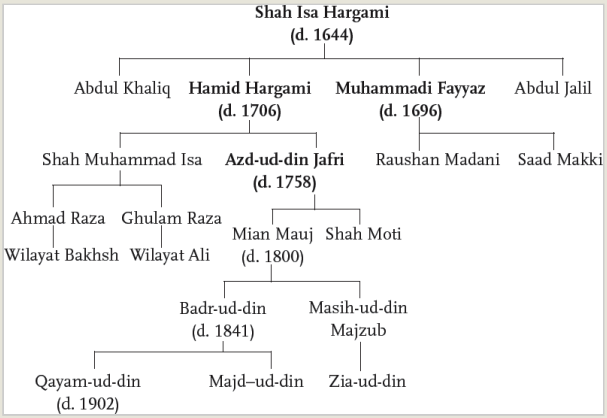


Chart 3.1 The Family of Shāh ʻĪsā Hargāmī

Source: Based on Shah ʻAzd-ud-dīn Jaʻfrī, *Maqasid-ul-arifin*.

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Besides the teacher–student relationships, the Chishti-Sābrīs were quick to form marital alliances with established families in Amroha, which would have assured a greater recognition in the locality. For **(p.135)** instance, Shāh Muhammadī's marriage alliance with the well-known Shāh 'Abdul Majīd 'Alavī's family ensured initial local popularity.[70]

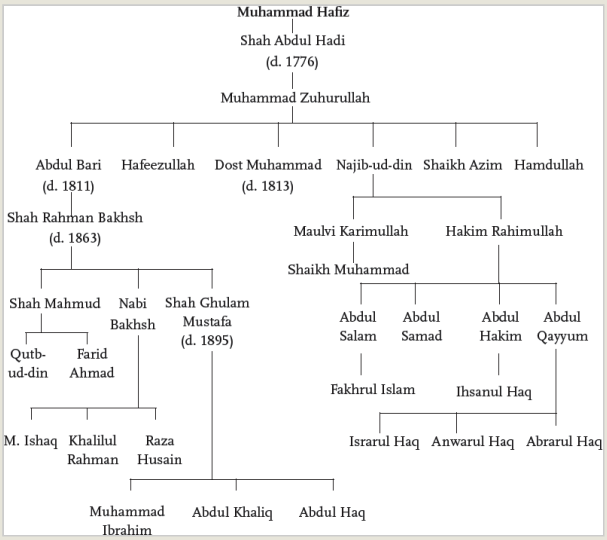


Chart 3.2 The Family of Shaikh Muhammad Hāfiz

Source: Based on Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, *Tazkirat-ul-kiram*.

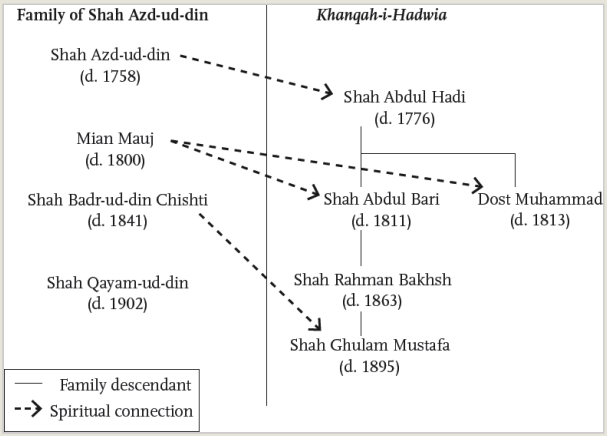


Chart 3.3 The Linkages of *Khānqāh-i-Hādwia* with the Family of Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn

Source: Based on Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, *Tazkirat-ul-kiram*, and Nisar Ali Bukhari, *Miftah-ul-khazain*.

Early Experiences of the Chishtī-Sābrī Order at Amroha

The experiences of Shāh Muhammadī (d. 1695) illustrate the tribulations that Chishtī-Sābrīs, as supporters of Ibn 'Arabī's doctrines, had to endure during the seventeenth century. The strong opposition from *'ulamā* and the court to the works of Shāh Muhibbullāh, an open advocate of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*, is well known. The atmosphere at Agra, where Shāh Muhammadī was sent, was far from congenial. Soon after his arrival there in 1650, troubles gathered around him. The reasons for his estrangement from the court seem to have been as much political as ideological. Prince Dārā Shikoh, already a devoted disciple of Shāh Muhibbullāh and a passionate student of *wujūdī* ideas, became a close associate of Shāh Muhammadī. Letters were exchanged between the two,[71] and Shāh Muhammadī's closeness to the Prince, the heir-apparent, proved a source of trouble at the beginning of Aurangzeb's reign. He was forced to leave Agra in 1659 and travelled to Amroha after brief sojourns in Delhi, Panipat, Karnal, Gangoh, and Muradabad. In 1679, he was

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again involved in some controversy and had to migrate to the Hijaz, returning to India in 1683. The other issue which seems to have strained relations with Aurangzeb was the stir created by Muhibbullāh's Arabic work *Taswiya*.[72] Aurangzeb had **(p.136)** sought clarifications from two of Muhibbullāh's disciples—Mīr Saiyid Qannaujī[73] and Shāh Muhammadī—about the validity of certain views expressed in *Taswiya* and threatened to burn the book if the views could not be justified. Mīr Qannaujī denied any relation with his spiritual master and the work was sent to Shāh Muhammadī with an order that, as a disciple of Shāh Muhibbullāh, he should either reconcile the statements in the treatise with the sacred laws of Sharī'at, or renounce his discipleship and burn the treatise. To this Shāh Muhammadī replied:

> I do not deny being his [Shāh Muhibbullāh's] disciple, nor does it behove me to show repentance for I have not yet reached that elevated mystic stage which the Shaikh had accomplished and from which he spoke. The day I reach that stage, I will write a commentary as desired. However, if His Majesty has finally decided to reduce the tract to ashes, much more fire is available in the royal kitchens than can be had in the house of ascetics who have resigned themselves to God. Orders may be issued to burn the work along with any copies that can be acquired.[74]

We do not know the outcome of this correspondence. Later accounts mention that his bold reply angered Aurangzeb, who ordered Shāh Muhammadī to be imprisoned at Delhi (later he was moved to Aurangabad in the Deccan, where he died in 1696).[75] But the earlier accounts, from Shāhnawāz Khān and Sher Khān Lodī, are silent about Aurangzeb's reaction. That Sher Khān Lodī, a critic of *wujūdī* ideas and a contemporary witness of the events, makes no mention of any subsequent action by Aurangzeb is particularly telling. In all probability, Shāh Muhammadī's forceful reply settled the matter for Aurangzeb and he took no further **(p.137)** action. Besides, we also find other commentaries of *Taswiya* appearing at the same time, such as those written by Khwāja Khurd and Shāh Kalīmullāh.[76] Most likely, if Shāh Muhammadī was imprisoned, it will have been for some other reason not mentioned by the sources. Moreover, it is most improbable that Aurangzeb was unaware of the *wujūdī* ideas expressed in *Taswiya* early in his reign and only considered commanding its incineration a quarter of a century later.[77]

Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn Ja'frī (d. 1758)

The legacy of Shāh Muhammadī was continued in Amroha by his nephew and *khalīfah* Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn. The latter's mystic outlook, as it evolved during his travels and association with his spiritual master, showed clear continuity with medieval Chishtī-Sābrī traditions. His major work *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn* forms a key source for the mystic ideology of the Sābrī order during this period. Its importance is further established as it was the first book on devotional themes composed in Amroha in the early years of the eighteenth century. It was begun

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on the instructions of his father and completed in 1712.[78] It is based on the teachings of Shāh Muhammadī, which Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn's father had noted down and which were then compiled and collected as an independent work. Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn gives the reason for writing *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*:

> Since my father had the chance to be with Shāh Muhammadī bin Shaikh ʻĪsā Hargāmī and attend his blessed assemblies, my father had written down some notes on Sūfī doctrines. These were handed over to me in 1111 AH [1699 AD] so that I might explain them in an easy language and it could be preserved for times to come.[79]

Significantly, one of the manuscripts of *Māqasid-ul-ʻarifīn* is found in Mecca in the Madrasah-i-Sawlatia (founded by Maulānā Rahmatullāh Kairānwī in the nineteenth century). The manuscript was copied in **(p.138)** Amroha in 1872 for Hājī Imdādullāh, on the instruction of Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī (the co-founder of Dārul ʻulūm, Deoband).[80] This suggests that the work was still considered authoritative in its field nearly two centuries after its composition.

After Shāh Muhibbullāh's own writings, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn* is a major exposition of the subtleties of *wujūdī* philosophy. It is a collection of various discourses and commentaries that revived the omitted topics of Sufism by elucidating them in a scholarly manner. It elaborates controversial aspects of asceticism about which discussion had temporarily ceased during the rule of Aurangzeb. A striking feature of the work is how well it combines Islamic mystic thought with ideas from Hindu Vedanta and Greek philosophy, in this respect greatly resembling the works of ʻAbdul Quddūs Gangohī.

Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn, in his *muqaddimah*, describes the potentials and peculiarities of spirituality before discussing the duties, character, conduct, and other qualities enjoined upon a Sūfī at the beginning of his spiritual career. The text, as expected from a proponent of *wujūdī* Sufism, begins with detailed discussion of the concept of *wujūd* (existence) before going into issues central to followers of Ibn ʻArabī, such as Divine Manifestation, the attributes of God, and the nature of prophethood (*nabuwwat*) and 'sainthood' (*wilāyat*). A separate chapter is devoted to *samāʻ* and special prayers, devotional practices, and exercises reserved for members of the *silsilah*. Some general discussions on the obligatory prayers, fasts, and other religious duties are also given due place in the work. A noteworthy element is the detailed discussion of the Names of God (*asmā'-ul-hasna*), their significance (*kamālāt-i-asmā'*) and the emphasis given to their recitation—a practice more particularly associated with the Sūfis of the Shattārī order. As was the literary practice of the period, it concludes with a formal epilogue (*khatimat-ul-kitāb*) comprising *qasīdah*s (elegies) in praise of the Prophet and bio-bibliographical accounts of Sūfis of the *silsilah* to whom the

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author was spiritually attached. These include the prominent Sūfīs of Amroha, such as Shāh Wilāyat, Shaikh ʻAbdul Majīd ʻAlavī, and Saiyid ʻAbdul Hakīm.

Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn's interest in Sanskrit and Vedantic philosophy was almost a hereditary trait and a natural outcome of his association with his **(p.139)** spiritual masters. Like his predecessors, Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn retained an interest in Hindu mysticism. He travelled to Benaras and Ayodhya, where he learnt Sanskrit and his interest in Hindu philosophy and metaphysical doctrines was kindled.[81] His family belonged to the Khairabad region of Awadh, and his spiritual connections can be traced to the even more pluralistic atmosphere of Rudauli. His works are very much in line with the mystic developments in the Awadh region. He is said to have written a book called *Satya sarowar* in Sanskrit, describing the philosophy of Ibn ʻArabī, which is no longer extant.[82] Both Shāh Muhammadī and Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn were fluent in the local Hindawi dialect. Shāh Muhammadī is known to have conversed in 'Hindustāni'; on being asked why he did not use Arabic or Persian, he replied, 'I was born in Hindustan and my mother-tongue is Hindawi'.[83] Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn, trained in a similar atmosphere, wrote *Quwwat-ul-kalām*, a dictionary (*lughat*) that includes Hindi words besides Arabic and Persian.[84]

However, evidence of such borrowings from the mysticism of other religious faiths diminishes as the Chishti-Sābrī order became more localized in Amroha and built up contacts with the *ʻulamā* of nearby *qasbah*s and with the Naqshbandī reformist school of Delhi. In a way, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻarifīn* is the last major work by a Chishtī-Sābrī that contains clear evidences of a continuation of the spiritual traditions of Awadh. With the subsequent establishment of Khānqāh-i-Hādwia at Amroha, none of the Chishti-Sābrī Sūfīs seem to have expressed a similar penchant for culturally assimilative mysticism. During the latter half of the eighteenth century, although the Chishtī-Sābrīs of the Amroha *khānqāh* continued interacting with non-Muslims and enrolling them as disciples, as well as conversing in Hindawi dialects, after *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, there is no other extant work produced by Sābrīs which suggests the same level of interest in Vedantic philosophy. Gradually over the following century, the Sābrī leadership in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab became more concerned with providing guidance exclusively to Muslims.

(p.140) Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī and the Khānqāh-i-Hadwia

Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī was born in Amroha to a respectable Siddiqui family of the Muhalla-i-Quraishiān. He did not receive formal education during childhood. His studies were abruptly halted following an encounter with a dervish which left him completely uninterested in formal education. His relatives made repeated attempts to induce him to join in the family occupation of cultivation and agricultural work, but in vain.[85] Shāh Hādī's cast of mind inclined him to asceticism. For some ten years he left his household and lived a life of strict austerity, making frequent spiritual retreats into the forests. It was during this

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period that he met a dervish, Shāh Yatīm Sehrāī (d. 1712),[86] who enrolled him in the Suhrawardī order. Inspired by his state of *jazb*, Shāh Hādī began to prefer a life of spiritual retreat and his accounts report that he performed difficult spiritual exercises with much ease. In the village of Haziqpur on the banks of the Swat river he spent his time in *wazā'if-o-azkār* (different forms of *zikr*) and at night stayed with a certain Faqīr Malang in Barahi (a village near Amroha).[87] Later, at Shāh Yatīm's suggestion, he joined the *khānqāh* of Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn and received spiritual training from him.

When Shāh Hādī was asked, 'God is everywhere; why then do you go to the forests in search of Him?', he replied, 'To attain Him alone in my heart, I have cut my connections with others.'[88] However, as he became engrossed in his *khānqāh*, he was unable to continue these retreats, and his popularity left him with less time for such excursions, though his longing for them did not abate. Once he raised the issue with Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn, complaining that so many people came to him that he got little time for himself. Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn told him to consider his visitors a 'blessing from God'.[89] On several occasions, Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn would recommend his visitors to meet Shāh Hādī for the fulfilment of their wishes.[90]

(p.141) Social Interaction and *Khānqāh* Activities

The *malfuzāt* of Shāh 'Abdul Hādī, compiled in 1813 as *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, give a detailed picture of *khānqāh* activities at Amroha and Barahi. The *khānqāh* attracted considerable crowds of local people, travellers, Sūfīs, and at times, landed aristocrats who were judged on the basis of their mental attitude (*zehniat*).[91] People from different social registers—*nawāb*s such as Amīn-ud-daulā, Nizām-ul-mulk, Duwinda Khān; the rich elites of Qazi tola muhalla of Bareilly; poor people such as a *hajjām* (barber) named Bārātī, a trader named Bhakkū Banjārā, and others—came to Shāh Hādī with their problems. His *malfūzāt* suggest three distinct levels of interactions at his *khānqāh*. For the great number of visitors, Shāh Hādī answered general queries, wrote recommendations, gave amulets, and served as moral tutor. Among such people, his popularity is generally attributed to his *karāmāt* (miracles), which find detailed mention in his *malfūzāt*. It is with this group that his interaction was most pronounced. Many visitors and devotees came to him from several nearby villages—the names of Purini, Morna, Poti, Basoli, Bharsi, Asmoli, Kesarpur, Aspur, Bahlavi, and Barkhupra, among others, are recorded.[92] His popularity was even greater in places where he had lived, such as Barahi, Amroha, Haziqpur, Bawapur, and Khai Kheda.[93]

(p.142) Shāh Hādī's interaction with the Mughal aristocracy was more limited. Here his discourse consisted of giving *nasīhat* (counsel), reminding them of their duties and responsibilities as rulers, a position that he believed was God-given and whose obligations must be discharged accordingly. With the nobility his contacts grew more intimate and he developed contacts with a number of elites

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resident in Bareilly, Sambhal, and Muradabad, places that he is known to have visited on invitation.[94]

A third level of interaction, a more intellectual in nature, was with his disciples, potential *khalīfah*s, and with the *‘ulamā* of nearby regions. It is in these conversations that one recognizes his mystical accomplishments and erudition.

Shāh Hādī put a high value on seeking the prayers of *faqīr*s and dervishes. In one of his discourses, he distinguished three types of prayers, explaining each through anecdotes and similes. He told his audience that a *faqīr*’s prayers can be ‘like seeds which take time to materialise and their benefits accrue to the future generations of that person. They can be like trees, from which people can hope for fulfilment of their wishes soon. Or they can be like fruits, which come to pass instantly’.[95] The main point is that a *faqīr*’s prayers never go unfulfilled but are answered on different time scales. He emphasized the efficacy of prayers and a number of instances given in the *malfūzāt* suggest that it was indeed one of the main sources of his popularity in the region.[96] A Brahmin of Kesarpur village, on having his wishes fulfilled through Shāh Hādī’s prayers, became his *murīd*. Gaining disciples from among Muslims and non-Muslims through such incidents is frequently recorded.[97]

Shāh Hādī believed that *barakāt* (blessings) of *faqīr*s are bestowed continually—sometimes through their *tawajjuh* (attention), without the need for saying anything; at other times, through the words they utter, or through a glance or even a gesture.[98] Not surprisingly, a number of visitors hoped for and sought his *tawajjuh*, which was considered sufficient to cure their ailments. Thus, when a son of Maulvī Ahsan Khān, a rich **(p.143)** and influential figure of Bareilly and a devotee of Shāh Hādī, was cured, it was believed to be the effect of Shāh Hādī’s *tawajjuh*.[99]

Karāmāt were always an important means of attracting devotees. Even the ruler of the region of Basoli, Nawāb Duwindā Khān, became interested in meeting Shāh Hādī on hearing about his miracles from his disciples Mīr Kallū and ‘Alī A‘zam Khān. However, Shāh Hādī himself disliked emphasizing such miracles and later confessed to Mīr Kallu that he was unwilling to meet Duwindā Khān initially because ‘you always mentioned to him my *karāmāt*, on which account he had developed faith in me. But over these miracles, I have no control’.[100] Nevertheless, in the rural environment in which he lived, such events contributed to his popularity, and even his *malfūzāt* were compiled ‘to inform his ‘*aqīdatmand* (devotees) about his *karāmāt*’.

While Shāh Hādī was residing at Khai Kheda and Barahi, people approached him with a wide variety of requests that throw light on what was expected of him. The requests made by common people included:[101]

(i) Request for prayers for offspring.[102]

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(ii) Request for prayers to prevent crop failure or shortage of rain.[103]
(iii) Request for prayers for security in times of political upheavals and Maratha incursions.[104]
(p.144) (iv) Request for prayers for people suffering from physical ailments.[105]
(v) Personal issues such as marriage, land-disputes, family disputes, and so forth.[106]
(vi) Requests to pray for jobs, promotions, or material prosperity.[107]

Shāh Hādī responded in different ways to these requests. Mostly, with his non-Muslim visitors, he asked them to recite *dohā*s written in the form of *munājāt* (a poem in praise of God). These *dohā*s served as prayers for different purposes, be it crop failure, shortage of rain, marital or other personal problems, or for safety during political disturbances.[108] To others he gave *ta'wīz* (amulet) or advised them to give charity. *Wazīfah*s (incantations) occupied an important place in Shāh Hādī's dealings with his visitor's problems. Certain *'amal* (spiritual practices) called *'amal-i-auzak* and *'amal-i-tahashshum*—based on a particular arrangement of Arabic letters, distinguished into *hūrūf-i-āsmānī* and *hūrūf-i-jismānī*—were to be recited at particular times for spiritual and material needs.[109]

Shāh Hādī's relations with Hindus were cordial. A number of Brahmins and people from other castes had great faith in him and some even became his *murīd*s.[110] He did not hesitate to give *ta'wīz* to non-Muslims who came to him for help. His fluency in Hindawi and expertise **(p.145)** in *'ilm-i-nujūm* (astrology) seems to have been particularly useful in his meetings with non-Muslims. His *malfūzat* are interspersed with Hindawi *dohā*s, *kabad*s, and *munājāt*s. One of his closest disciples, Kripā Rām, originally a Brahmin astrologer from Asmoli village (near Sambhal), is frequently mentioned in his *malfūzāt*. Kripā Rām had a good command of Hindawi and had authored several books. He used to visit Shāh Hādī and discuss *'ilm-i-riyāzī* (mathematics) and *'ilm-i-nujūm* (astrology). He was so impressed by Shāh Hādī's knowledge that he wished to become his *murīd*. Shāh Hādī accepted him as a *murīd* for his spiritual development but did not insist that he convert and allowed him to carry his Brahmin outlook.[111] Although no explicit attempt was made to convert him, they used to discuss the Qur'ān. On his request, Shāh Hādī wrote a book on astrology, no longer extant, titled *Todar*. Another book written for the benefit of his disciples and 'to strengthen the faith of Kripā Rām' was *Irshād-ut-tālibīn*, which became the reason for Kripā Rām's eventual conversion to Islam.[112]

During the eighteenth century, Rohillās and the Nawābs of Awadh were the virtual rulers of Doab, and a number of disciples and devotees of Shāh Hādī were Afghans. His contacts with the aristocracy were of an intimate nature and reinforced through his visits to Bareilly, Sambhal, Basoli and Muradabad, where he often stayed with the local elites. Nawāb Mahdī 'Alī Khān (son-in-law of

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Sarbuland Khān) had great faith in Shāh Hādī.[113] When Shāh Hādī moved to Sambhal in his old age, Nawāb Amīn-ud-daulā offered him his house to stay in. While at Lucknow, he was presented with large sums of money, which he politely refused.[114] Shāh Hādī also visited Basoli after repeated requests from Nawāb Duwindā Khān. When Muhammad Ahsan Khān ʻAbbāsī, a rich man of Bareilly, was informed about the popularity of Shāh Hādī, he paid him a visit in Basoli, and later stayed with him in Bareilly. He soon became a close associate of Shāh Hādī, who also stayed at Aspur where Ahsan Khān held a *jāgīr*.[115]

(p.146) Two of the disciples of Shāh Hādī, Nawāb Amīn-ud-daulā of Sambhal and Mirza Akbar ʻAlī Khān, were members of the Mughal aristocracy. They seem to have put him in touch with the Mughal Emperor Shāh ʻĀlam (r. 1759–1806), who received some counsel (*nasīhat*) from Shāh Hādī. In a letter he instructed Shāh ʻĀlam:

> As a *hakīm* [doctor] gives medicines for the cure of his patients and instructs them on their dosage and use, in a similar fashion God has appointed a ruler over His *banda* [servants] and it is an obligation on the ruler to strive for the benefit and prosperity of his subjects.[116]

The *malfūzāt* of Shāh Hādī also record two written responses from Shāh ʻĀlam. In one, the Emperor wrote:

> O Knower of Divine Secrets, achiever of *marifat* and the well-wisher of *khalq-Allāh*, Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī! I received your *nasīhat-nāmah* through Akbar ʻAlī Khān and read it carefully. I consider your *tawajjuh* on me a blessing from God. I will try to do more than what you have instructed me to do for the welfare of my subjects. May God give me the strength to achieve it! I am entering the fort of Azimabad at this time and wish to request your prayers that God may give me strength. My heart longs for a meeting with you so I can benefit from it.[117]

In the second letter, Shāh ʻĀlam acknowledges the receipt of a letter saying:

> I received your *duʻā-nama* through Akbar ʻAlī Khān and read it carefully. I am thankful to God that the hearts of *auliyāʼ-Allāh* are towards me. Akbar ʻAlī Khān informed me that you have prayed for me and I hope you will continue to bestow your *tawajjuh* on me, so that the enemies of the sultanate are defeated and I may strengthen the Empire as my ancestors did.[118]

In spite of such lofty connections, Shāh Hādī preferred a life of solitude and kept himself aloof from the influence of the nobility and the rich. This view was in line with the usual stance of the Chishtī order of maintaining a distance from the power-wielding sections of society and avoiding getting embroiled in political machinations. His interaction **(p.147)** with the elite seems to have been limited

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to providing spiritual guidance and moral counsel, rather than attempting to mould or influence political events.

As the Amroha *khānqāh* developed under Shāh Hādī, the first contacts with the Naqshbandī leadership of Delhi were also initiated. He is reported to have met Mirzā Mazhar in Sambhal, while visiting Saiyid Ma'sūm and Nawāb Amīn-ud-daulā. Sambhal, where Shāh Hādī spent a few years, was a stronghold of Mirzā Mazhar's disciples.[119] In one of their meetings, while discussing the subtleties of Sufism, Shāh Hādī acknowledged Mirzā Mazhar's accomplishments in '*ilm-i-bātinī* and '*ilm-i-zāhirī* and asked him for explanations of Hadīs and certain Qur'ānic verses. Though Shāh Hādī had not received formal training, his practical knowledge of *mujāhidāt* (spiritual endeavours), '*ibādāt* (devotional exercises), *riyāzāt* (mystic exercises), and *tasawwuf* was immense and attracted crowds of disciples and seekers of spiritual Islam. In his discourses, Shāh Hādī surprised his audience by quoting supportive texts and explanations from the Qur'ān. When Mirzā Mazhar visited him in Barāhī and Amroha, he was much impressed by Shāh Hādī's knowledge of the *zāhirī* aspects of the religion.[120]

Although there is no explicit mention of any ideological influence as a result of these initial contacts, it did result in some change. For instance, when, towards the end of his life, Shāh Hādī had settled in Khai Kheda, a disciple from Bareilly enquired about the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*. Shāh Hādī immediately asked him to repent of such things and said, 'until a particular state (*hāl*) is reached, one should not disclose these things. Those who express them without being in that condition are guilty of *kufr* (unbelief).'[121] These first contacts with the Delhi Naqshbandī leadership were further bolstered by his grandson Shāh 'Abdul Bārī, who was initiated by Mirzā Mazhar into the Naqshbandī-Mujaddidī branch, bringing the two orders still closer.

(p.148) The Training of *Khalīfah*s

Shāh Hādī's disciples and *khalīfah*s came from diverse sections of society and different places. The majority belonged to the Qazi tola muhalla in Bareilly. Shāh Nuzhat 'Alī was enrolled while Shāh Hādī was in Bareilly and remained with him in Amroha for twenty years, before moving on to Barahi.[122]Among other influential figures granted *khilāfat* in Bareilly was Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Khān (from the sādāt-i-'Abbāsī family), who had served under Emperor Shāh 'Ālam as *qāzī* of Bareilly, where he met Shāh Hādī and joined his circle.[123] Others, such as Maulānā Shaikhul Islām and Maulānā Sadrul Sharī'at also commanded respect of the local people. Even in the twentieth century, this family continued to participate in the '*urs* celebrations of Shāh Hādī.[124] Another important disciple, Karāmat Khān, was described as the 'envy of the people of his times'. He often visited Barahi and became so close to Shāh Hādī that many sought his mediation if they wished to meet Shāh Hādī.[125] Two disciples, Mīr 'Asadullāh Khān (Mīr Kallū) and 'Alī A'zam Khān, were in the service of Nawāb Duwindā Khān and were among the sādāt-i-Amroha. Besides the *ashrāf*, there

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were two converts, Hindu Brahmins Jumman Shāh and Shāh ‘Ināyat, who had recently embraced Islam and were subsequently trained in mysticism and promoted to the rank of *khalīfah*.[126] Others like Shaikh Nūr and Shāh Husain Wilāyatī were sent to Lahore and Afghanistan respectively, after finishing their training.[127] Another of Shāh Hādī’s *khalīfah*s, Bashārat ‘Alī of Bareilly, in his immense love for his *shaikh*, travelled over five miles every day from his hometown to Khai Kheda to see him.[128]

Shāh Hādī considered that any aspirant to Sufism must possess *‘ishq-i-ilāhī* (love, yearning for God) which was as a pre-requisite for spiritual journeying (*sulūk*). He once told his assembly (*majlis*):

> A *sālik* [traveller on Sūfī path] must have a guide [*rehbar*] to train him on the path. But if the *tālib* [seeker] lacks *bū-i-‘ishq* [fragrance of Love], his entire **(p.149)** struggle will be useless, just as a child who lacks bravery cannot fight even if provided with the best weaponry. It is an inborn trait.[129]

To one of his disciples from Muradabad, his advice was:

> By your external actions do good to the *khalq*, but your intention [*niyat*] should always be to please God. From your external actions you will benefit in this world, while from your devotion to God, you will benefit spiritually.[130]

Though his own early life had been spent in moments of *jazb*, Shāh Hādī disliked people inflating the importance of occasions of ecstasy. He preferred that a Sūfī maintain *zabt* (restraint) and not claim that he has reached such and such mystic stage. In one *majlis*, he told his disciples that a Sūfī must not boast of his *zuhd* or *taqwā* (asceticism or piety), because although these qualities are important, one’s salvation depends on the last moments of one’s life which, if not spent well, could nullify one’s earlier worship. So one should always keep one’s self (*nafs*) subdued.[131] When he heard that one of his disciples had been overcome by ecstasy in a *samā‘ majlis*, he rebuked him, saying that he had dishonoured himself and his *shaikh*.[132]

Shāh Hādī took a keen interest in the spiritual attainments of his disciples and guided them in many ways. An interesting incident brings out his role as saviour of a disciple. It is narrated that Shāh ‘Ināyat’s relations with a contemporary Suhrawardī Sūfī, Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn, had become strained and because of the latter’s influence, Shāh ‘Ināyat was unable to proceed to higher stages on the arduous path of the mystic, in spite of continuous incantations and prayers. Shāh Hādī, in order to rescue his disciple from this peril, confiscated the mystic prowess (*bātinī quwwat*) of Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn and bestowed it on Shāh ‘Ināyat.[133] His discussions with disciples were often on the basics of Sufism, which he explained through anecdotes. Several stories with morals behind them

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(p.150) were narrated by him in *majlis* to explain the importance of *qanā'at* (tranquillity), truthfulness, *tawakkul*, maintaining silence, and other such qualities.[134]

He also fulfilled the worldly needs of his disciples. He wrote letters of recommendation (*sifārish-nāmah*) for Shāh Rafī'-ud-dīn Khān[135] to Shāh 'Ālam. Rafī'-ud-dīn acknowledges in his *tazkirah* the kindness and affection (*bisyār mihrbān būd*) of Shāh Hādī.[136] Similarly, when Shāh Nuzhat 'Alī was worried about his economic situation, Shāh Hādī consoled him and said, 'a *faqīr* should be away from his wealth and property in order to walk on the path of *sulūk*.'

The sheer number of '*urs* celebrated on his death anniversary at various *qasbah*s around Amroha is indicative of his wide popularity. His '*urs* came to be held simultaneously at his tomb in Amroha and at Khai Kheda on 4 Ramadan every year.[137] *Samā'* was held there till the early years of twentieth century, along with recitations from Qur'ān for *īsāl-i-sawāb* (conveying the reward of a virtuous deed to a deceased person). Another '*urs* was held at Amroha from 6–7 Shawwal every year, attended by people from the surrounding *qasbah*s. A fourth '*urs* took place in Barahi on 16–18 Zil-Qa'da, and a fifth was held in Haziqpur, where Shāh Hādī had spent a few years in meditation.[138] These '*urs* were wholly managed by his descendants with arrangements made for the visitors, who were provided with free food and at times also accommodation.

Legacy of Shāh 'Abdul Hādī and the Expansion of Sābrī Networks

After Shāh 'Abdul Hādī's death in 1776, the Amroha establishment was continued through the efforts of his two grandsons and *khalīfah*s, Shāh **(p.151)** Dost Muhammad (d. 1813)[139] and Shāh 'Abdul Bārī. Shāh Hādī used to say about them:

> تمام نعمتہاےء کہ خداوندِ عالم مرا عنایت فرمود ، تمام و کمال بہ شیخ عبدالباری و دوست محمد دادم
>
> All the grace [mystical blessings] which God has granted to me, I have given away in its entirety to Shaikh 'Abdul Bārī and Dost Muhammad.[140]

Shāh Bārī's education began during the lifetime of Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn, but it is not known how much he studied under him. At the age of twenty-two, he, along with his brother Dost Muhammad, was called to Haziqpur by their grandfather Shāh Hādī. Here they were trained in mysticism (*ashghāl-i-bātinī*) and invested with *khilāfat*. Later they also received *khilāfat* from Miān Mauj, son of Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn, which reinforced the links between the two families.[141]

Shāh Bārī had a firm faith in the miracles (*karāmāt*) of *auliyā'* and used to pray for their concealment, quoting a famous Chishtī saying:[142]

> فرض اللہ علی اولیأ کتمان الکرامت کما فرض علی انبیأ اظہار المعجزہ

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God has ordained upon *auliyā* to conceal their miracles as He has upon the prophets to reveal theirs.

(p.152) Being a Chishtī he was fond of *samā'*, but considered it lawful only for those who relished it in the 'proper way'. Like the reformist Sūfīs, he also disliked the open assertion of *wahdat-ul-wujūd* without being in ecstasy (*wajd*) or experiencing a particular mystic state (*hāl*). Nevertheless, he remained a devotee of Ibn 'Arabī's philosophy. For his disciples, he preferred the practice of *zikr-i-jahr* (loud *zikr*) and considered it beneficial. Keen interest was taken in the grooming of disciples and emphasis was given on purifying their inner selves (*tazkiyah-i-bātin*) through prioritizing the inculcation of moral values. One of his favourite sayings to this effect was:[143]

ده چیز بروں کن از درون سینہ　　خواہی کہ شود دل تو چوں آینہ

بخل و حسد و ریا و کبر و کینہ　　حرص و امل و غضب و دروغ و غیبت

Shāh 'Abdul Bārī considered complete trust in one's *shaikh* a necessity for any disciple, but also insisted that a true master should strictly follow the religious law (Sharī'at) in his life and actions.[144] His own time was spent mostly in prayers, both obligatory and supererogatory, and in mystic practices such as *zikr* or *samā'*, but his favourite occupation remained recitation of the Qur'ān. As was the case with other Sūfī thinkers, Shāh Bārī too disliked the acquisition of theoretical knowledge lacking experience, and in his eyes knowing something without experiencing it was futile. He was well versed in external aspects of the religion but his knowledge of its mystic dimension was even greater. For this reason many *'ulamā* remained affable towards him.

(p.153) Contacts with Religious Scholars and Sūfīs

Under Shāh 'Abdul Bārī, the *khānqāh* attracted people from far off places. From Rampur, *'ulamā* and Sūfīs such as Shāh Hāfiz Jamālullāh, Faiz Bakhsh (Shah Dargāhī), Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Mujaddidī, and Maulānā Shāh Sirāj Ahmad Muhaddis, were regular visitors.[145] The presence of titles like Maulānā, Mujaddid (reviver), and Muhaddis in their names indicate an increasing enrolment of *'ulamā* in Sūfī networks. From Amroha, Shāh Saifullāh, Maulānā Hakīm Saiyid Jalāl-ud-dīn Ja'frī, and Maulānā Saiyid Nizām-ud-dīn Ja'frī, among others, were his devotees. From the well-known families of sādāt-i-Amroha came Saiyid Amān 'Alī Khān (Ghadyāl-wāle). A renowned scholar of Lucknow, Shāh 'Abdul Rahmān, visited the *khānqāh* in 1805 and stayed with Shāh Bārī for six months. In Shāh 'Abdul Rahmān's *malfūzāt*, the stay is described as 'beneficial' and he met several eminent personalities of Amroha at the Sābrī *khānqāh*.[146] These visits by scholars from different places provided the residents of the *khānqāh* with the opportunity to receive guidance and training in Hadīs studies. While Shāh 'Abdul Rahmān was in Amroha, he taught books on Hadīs, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf* to Shāh 'Abdul Bārī's son Rahmān Bakhsh (d. 1863).[147]

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Under Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī, strong connections were made with the Naqshbandī order of Delhi. In 1770–1, Mirzā Mazhar came to Amroha, to which he has referred in one of his letters, and stayed in the *madrasah* of his disciple Mīr Kallū (Saiyid ʻAsadullāh Khan).[148] Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī, then a young student, visited his assembly and engaged in conversations, during which he probably received some training on traversing the paths and stations of *sulūk*. In their meeting Mirzā reportedly said, ʻYour grandfather [Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī] has been very kind towards me and I am much **(p.154)** obliged to him and "Is there any reward for *ihsān* [kindness] other than *ihsān*?,"[149] so it is my duty to repay you.ʼ Thereafter, he went to Shāh Bārī's *khānqāh* and stayed there for a few weeks. Shāh Bārī was initiated into the Naqshbandī *silsilah* and his understanding of mysticism elicited much appreciation from Mirzā Mazhar, who remarked:[150]

قدم شیخ عبدالباری در ہر مقام از ما یک قدم بیش بود

After Mirzā Mazhar's death, Shāh Bārī travelled to Delhi while on his way to a pilgrimage to Ajmer and stayed at the Naqshbandī *khānqāh*, where he met the acclaimed scholars Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz and Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī.[151]

Succession at the Amroha *Khānqāh*

The links created with the Naqshbandīs of Delhi were further strengthened by the successors of Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī. From among his *khalīfah*s, two significant branches emerged. One was led by Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm Fātimī (d. 1830), who came from Roh in Afghanistan. Initially a Qādirī, he joined the circle of Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī at Amroha and received his investiture. In 1828, he was sent to represent the *khānqāh* and participate in the mujāhidīn movement of Saiyid Ahmad. The Deoband branch of the Sābrī order, which spread in Muzaffarnagar district, was connected through him to the Khānqāh-i-Hādwia. His involvement in the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad marks a turning point in the history of the Chishtī-Sābrī order, as it declared for the first time its identity as a reformist Sūfī institution.

Meanwhile at Amroha, the Sābrī traditions were perpetuated by another of Shāh Bārī's successor, Saiyid Mīrān Hātim ʻAlī (d. 1830), who belonged to the Hazara region in Afghanistan.[152] Before joining the **(p.155)** *khānqāh*, he studied for five years at the *madrasah* of Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn in Delhi, where he learnt Hadīs, *tafsīr*, and *fiqh*, and received *khilāfat* in the Chishtī-Nizāmī order. Thereafter, he left for the Hijaz to perform pilgrimage and for further studies. He travelled widely in search of a *murshid* and after a vision (*bashārat*) arrived at Amroha, where he studied with Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī and Dost Muhammad for eleven years, before receiving *khilāfat* from them.[153]

Another major figure at the *khānqāh* was Shāh Rahmān Bakhsh Chishtī (d. 1863, son of Shāh Bārī).[154] He studied under Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz, visited the *khānqāh* of Mirzā Mazhar, and sought the blessings of Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī in Delhi. On

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finishing his formal education, he studied *tasawwuf* in Amroha under Dost Muhammad and Mīrān Hātim ʻAlī, and received the robe of *khilāfat* from them. Early in 1823, he again met Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz, on his way to Ajmer, and was initiated into the Naqshbandī order, and then travelled widely to Panipat, Karnal, Pakpattan, Sirhind, Gangoh, and Kalyer, all of which had been centres of the expanding Chishtī order.

Further contacts were made under his son Shāh Ghulām Mustafā (d. 1895). This was the time when a parallel branch of the Sābrī order was operating in Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Thanabhawan, Jhinjhana, and other *qasbah*s. Ghulām Mustafā, though a Sūfī, was well versed in the external aspects of religious knowledge. His early education in Persian and Arabic was completed in Bareilly and his biographers portray him as a staunch follower of Islamic Law who did not hesitate to ask questions to the *ʻulamā* in case of doubts on an issue. He was in close touch with scholars of repute, including Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī, the co-founder of Dārul ʻulūm.[155] Ghulām Mustafā was respected by the sādāt-i-Amroha, **(p.156)** especially the families of Muhalla Ghadiālwālā, who often provided him *imlāk* (property given as gift) for the upkeep of his *khānqāh*.[156] Besides the sādāt of Amroha, some members of *ashrāf* families of the towns of Basoli, Bareilly, and Sambhal also became his disciples, suggesting a growing popularity of the order among the elites. He placed emphasis on *zāhirī* aspects of religion, an indicator of his growing closeness with the *ʻulamā*. He did not receive spiritual training but, instead, studied well known texts like *Mashāriq-ul-anwār*, *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, and *ʻAwārif-ul-maʻārif*.[157] However, this trend of a growing interaction with the *ʻulamā* becomes more noticeable in the Sābrī branch that operated in the Muzaffarnagar region.

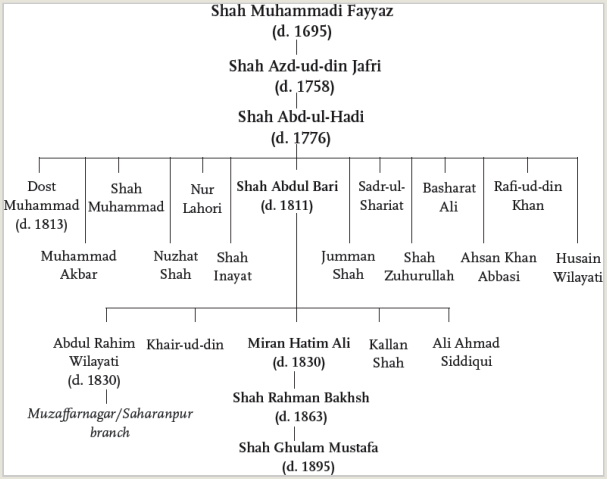


Chart 3.4 The Khānqāh-i-Hādwia in Amroha (*ca*. 1700–1900)

The second half of the eighteenth century was a significant period in the history of the Chishtī-Sābrī order. During these years the order was transplanted from the syncretic atmosphere of Awadh to the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab. This shift brought the Sābrīs into a cultural environment substantially different from that in which its traditions had been formed. These *qasbah*s, as explained in the foregoing, were not only centres of trading and economic activity in colonial India, but also possessed a rich cultural heritage and were inhabited by renowned families with strong religious leanings. Amroha in particular had been a hub of spiritual activity for several centuries, where the

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families of Shāh Wilāyat, Shāh Abban, and ʻAbdul Majīd ʻAlavī had played a conspicuous part in developing and preserving the town's cultural heritage. Belonging to the esteemed Saiyid genealogies, these local elite families had served in the Mughal bureaucracy and received *jāgīr*s and *madad-i-maʻāsh* for that service. Travelling proved a boon for these small towns, since a sizeable number of those who travelled to Delhi to be trained in Madrasah-i-Rahīmia and *madrasah*s of Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn, Mirzā Mazhar, Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī, and others, came back to their hometowns with a new understanding of religious principles and **(p.157)** mystical doctrines. Following the establishment of Khānqāh-i-Hādwia, we notice a significant increase in these contacts and a growing influence of Walīullāhī traditions in the region. Although direct references to Shāh Walīullāh are lacking in contemporary Sābrī accounts, other Naqshbandī Sūfīs such as Mirzā Mazhar and Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī are frequently referred to in the *malfūzāt* of Shāh Hādī. In the list of disciples and *khalīfah*s of both Shāh Hādī and Shāh Bārī, one notices a steadily increasing number of titles such as 'Maulānā', 'Muhaddis', 'Mujaddid', and so forth. Some of their disciples, including Mīrān Hātim ʻAlī and Shāh Rahmān Bakhsh, had been trained at the *madrasah*s of Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn and Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz, before they joined the Amroha *khānqāh*.

Source: Based on Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, *Tazkirat-ul-kiram*, and Hafiz Muhammad Husain, *Anwar-ul-arifin*.

As a result, Chishtī-Sābrī thought during this period shows influences from both the reformist Naqshbandī order and a continuation of the mystic traditions of medieval Awadh. The family of Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn hailed from Awadh and his spiritual training was also on the same **(p.158)** lines. Interest in Hindu philosophy, Vedanta, cosmogony, Sanskrit, and yoga exercises, for instance, bore the stamp of Awadhi influences. The most definitive evidence suggesting the continuity of such traditions comes from *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn* of Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn. Also during this period, the contacts of Chishtī-Sābrī leadership were more with the *ʻulamā* of Lucknow or Bareilly than with those at Delhi. Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī, who is not known to have visited Delhi, made extended visits to Bareilly and Lucknow. These contacts were reinforced when Shāh ʻAbdul Rahmān, an *ʻālim* of Lucknow, stayed at the Khānqāh-i-Hādwia for six months. The Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s of Amroha continued to operate at a popular level and were more concerned with solving the everyday problems of their *murīd*s. Their followers looked on them as vehicles of Divine Grace, and approached them mainly for their spiritual powers, mystical accomplishments, and *karāmāt*, rather than for any scholarly erudition. But on the other hand, we also note some elements of change. The biographies begin to emphasize strict adherence to religious law. Sābrīs, who in earlier times were known to have sought ecstasy (*jazb*) and intoxication (*sukr*), now appear to lead lives of sobriety (*sahv*) in full awareness and observance of the boundaries of the religious laws. In the training of their

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disciples, there is greater insistence on the acquisition of traditional Islamic knowledge of Hadīs, *fiqh*, and *tasawwuf*, along with spiritual exercises (*mujāhidāt*). The debates regarding *wahdat-ul-wujūd* are also toned down and although the Sābrīs remained loyal adherents of the doctrine, they avoided discussing it in their discourses. None of the eighteenth century-Sūfīs of Amroha built magnificent tombs or shrines, as was the case with their spiritual forefathers. Instead, most of them were buried in simple graves without any elaborate constructions over them. This in itself suggests the progress of the order towards a stricter *khānqāh–madrasah* institution. This progress became much more rapid with the engagement of Chishtī-Sabrīs with the Tariqāh-i-Muhammadia and the growing influences of Walīullāhī *'ulamā* in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab. This was accomplished by the branch which moved out of Amroha under the leadership by Shāh 'Abdul Rahīm Fātimī and contributed to the expansion of the order in the districts of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur.

Notes:

([1]) For a discussion on the early usage of the term, see Mushirul Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbahs in Colonial Awadh* (Delhi, 2004), pp. 10–11. For a definition and brief account of the development of *qasbah*s, see M. Raisur Rahman, *Locale, Everyday Islam and Modernity: Qasbah Towns and Muslim Life in Colonial India* (Delhi, 2015), pp. 27–46.

([2]) Rahman, *Locale, Everyday Islam and Modernity*, p. 11.

([3]) F. E. A. Chamier, *Report of the Regular Settlement of the Bara Banki District* (Allahabad, 1879), p. 33; cited in Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism*, pp. 11–12. Another British officer writing towards the end of eighteenth century describes the *qasbah* Shamli (in Muzaffarnagar district) as a town two miles in circumference, which contains 'many handsome houses both of brick and stone. The streets intersect each other at right angles and have separate gates at their entrances, which at night are shut for the security of the inhabitants. At Shamli, there is a large *bazaar* and a mint where money used formerly to be coined. But the trade of this place, like many others in the Duab, is now on the decline, and with the exception of a few coarse cloths, the manufactures are at a stand. In its present stage the villages attached to the parganah of Shamli yield a revenue of about Rs. 50,000, though in the flourishing times of the Empire it was far more considerable': William Francklin, *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas* (London, 1805), p. 93.

([4]) David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, 1978), p. 181.

([5]) Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982), ch. 6.

([6]) Rahman, *Locale, Everyday Islam and Modernity*.

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([7]) In the absence of any reliable demographic details from the eighteenth century, I have relied on the figures we get in the earliest gazetteers, which give some sense of the social composition of the population.

([8]) For the three districts, see *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford, 1908): vol. 17, pp. 421, 423; vol. 18, pp. 83, 87; and vol. 21, pp. 367, 372.

([9]) Muradabad district was bounded on the south by Badaun, on the west by Meerut and Bulandshahr, on the east by Rampur, and on the north by Bijnor and Nainital. Towards the end of the nineteenth century it comprised nearly fifteen towns and as many as 2,450 villages.

([10]) Saharanpur district was straddled by the Shiwalik ranges in the north, and on the south was bounded by Muzaffarnagar district. It consisted of eighteen towns and 1,628 villages.

([11]) The figures are from H. R. Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1903–11), vols. 2, 3, and 16; Edwin Atkinson, *Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North-West Provinces of India*, vol. 2 (Allahabad, 1875).

([12]) Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism*, p. 41.

([13]) Similarly, in Saharanpur (in 1872), the four numerically strongest castes (Brahmins, Gujars, Banias, and Rajputs) were only 30 per cent of the total Hindu population. In 1901, nearly seventy-six castes existed but only sixteen of them made up 88 per cent of the Hindu population: Nevill, *District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, vol. 2, pp. 100–6.

([14]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 2, p. 189.

([15]) C. A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770–1870* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 350–1.

([16]) While in the region of Awadh towns such as Amethi, Bilgram, Daryabad, Gopamau, Kakori, Malihabad, Rudauli, and Shahabad supplied Muslims for Mughal service; in Upper Doab it was towns such as Amroha, Sambhal, Muradabad, Saharanpur, Thanabhawan, Jhinjhana, Nanauta, Deoband, and Gangoh that did so.

([17]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 2, pp. 113, 321.

([18]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 2, pp. 117, 120.

([19]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 16, pp. 87–8.

([20]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 2, p. 116.

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([21]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 16, p. 191.

([22]) Sambhal was a provincial capital before being superseded by Muradabad during the reign of Shāh Jahān (r. 1627–58). It served as a halting place between the capital city of Delhi and the key medieval town of Badaun. For the importance of Badaun in early medieval India, see K. A. Nizami, 'Badāun: Islamī hind ke daur-i-awwal mein', *Zulqarnain* (Badaun number), April 1956, pp. 25–7.

([23]) Shāh Sharf-ud-dīn Wilāyat was a renowned Sūfi who settled in Amroha in the early thirteenth century; many families of present-day Amroha attribute their forefather's presence in Amroha to his coming. For biographical details on Shāh Wilāyat, see Mahmūd Ahmad 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām* (Delhi, 1932), pp. 4–20. Shāh Abban was another leading Sufi of the town with whom many current residents of Amroha could relate to. He was a *khalīfah* of Shaikh 'Alā-ud-dīn Chishtī 'Feelmast' and settled at Amroha around 1523–4. For biographical details on him and his descendants, see Khurshīd Mustafā Rizvī, *Tazkirah-i Badr chisht* (Delhi, 1975).

([24]) The role and influence of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh (d. 1829), a disciple of Shāh 'Abdul 'Azīz and a resident of Kandhla, was particularly important for the Chishtī-Sābrī *silsilah* during the nineteenth century. There is an account of the renowned families of '*ulamā* and *mashā'ikh* of Kandhla in Nūrul Hasan Rāshid, 'Qasbah Kāndhla ke chand purāne mashā'ikh or ahl-i-kamāl jo ab gumnām aur ghair mut'ārif hain', *Ahwāl-o-āsār* 5, 1 (2004); and Ihteshām-ul-Hasan, *Tazkirah-i-aslāf hālāt-i-mashā'ikh-i-kāndhla* (Delhi, 1963).

([25]) Even some of the orthodox Hindu castes, as noticed by British civil servant William Crooke, worshipped local saints of Awadh such as Shāh Madār, Sakhī Sarwar, and others: William Crooke, *The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Province and Oudh*, vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1896), p. xvi. Meer Hasan Ali reported that in early nineteenth-century Lucknow, 'Hindoos, even on approaching the shrine, bow their heads with much solemn gravity …': Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmans of India: Description of their Manners, Customs, Habits and Religious Observances* (London, 1832), vol. 1, p. 48.

([26]) *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, the *malfūzāt* of Shāh 'Abdul Hādī of Amroha, is full of needs of this sort and people visited him mostly for the fulfilment of such needs. See below, pp. 143–4.

([27]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 3, p. 264.

([28]) His '*urs* was organized on 12–14 Muharram each year and was attended by local people, both Hindus and Muslims.

([29]) Many *ashrāf* families expressed their emotional attachment to their homeland (*watan*) by attaching the name of the *qasbah* to their own. For Sūfis

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and *ulamā* like, among many others, Shāh ʻAbdul Hādī Amrohwī, Miānjī Nūr Muhammad Jhinjhānwī, Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, and Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī, the *qasbah* suffix signified an unbreakable bond and a lasting identity.

([30]) Hājī Imdādullāh, *Ghizāʼ-i-rūh*, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Waqar Ali bin Mukhtar Ali (Deoband, n.d.), p. 223.

([31]) For instance the Farangi Mahalis, though based in Lucknow, retained an undying attachment to their *qasbah*. See Mushirul Hasan, *From Pluralism to Separatism*, p. 16.

([32]) The Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz thus wrote:

اب تو یہ ویرانہ ہے تھا جب کبھی جھنجانہ تھا اس کہ ذرے ذرے پر تحریر ہے درس حیات

Cited in Nasīm Ahmad ʻAlavī, *Sawānih qutb-i-ʻālam Miānjī Nūr Muhammad sāhib* (Jhinjhana, 2004), p. 14.

([33]) S. M. Azizuddin Husain's *Medieval Towns: A Case Study of Amroha and Jalali* (Delhi, 1991), although brief, is the only work of note on Amroha. More recently, Justin Jones looked at the Islamic identity of the town and its experiences in the post-1860 period in his article 'The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a "Muslim" Town in Colonial India: The Case of Amroha', *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 4 (2009): 871–908. Also see Rahman, *Locale, Everyday Islam & Modernity*.

([34]) Tradition attributes the 'conquest' event to the semi-legendary figure of Salar Masud Ghazi. For details, see K. A. Nizami, 'Ghazi Miyan', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (eds) B. Lewis, Ch-Pellat and J. Schacht (Leiden, 1983), vol. 2; Tahir Mahmood, 'The Dargah of Sayyid Salar Masud Ghazi in Bahraich: Legend, Tradition and Reality', and I. H. Siddiqui, 'A note on the Dargah of Salar Masud in Bahraich in the Light of the Standard Historical Sources', *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries IV (Muslim Shrines in India: Their Character, History and Significance)*, (ed.) Christian W. Troll (Delhi, 1989). The most recent study is Shahid Amin, *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of a Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (Delhi, 2015).

([35]) For the importance of Badaun in early medieval India, see Nizami, 'Badāun: Islamī hind ke daur-i-awwal mein', pp. 25–7.

([36]) Under the Sultans of Delhi, Amroha was an important *iqtaʻ* where a military garrison was maintained to counter Mongol incursions. The first direct reference to Amroha dates from the reign of Balban (r. 1265–87) when the region was much disturbed by the rebellious chiefs of Katehr, 'who ignored the authority of the *muqtaʻ* of Badaun and Amroha'. It witnessed frequent unrest until 1266 when the Sultan crushed the rebels so comprehensively that, as Baranī informs us, there was not a single uprising in the region till the reign of Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī (r.

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1290–6) and the *wilāyat* of Amroha, Badaun, and Sambhal remained peaceful: Ziā'-ud-dīn Baranī, *Tārikh-i-firoz shāhī*, (ed.) Saiyid Ahmad Khan (Calcutta, 1862), pp. 58–9. See also Muhammad Qāsim Farishtah, *Tārīkh-i-Farishtah*, vol. 1 (Lucknow, AH 1281), p. 256; 'Abdul Qādir Badāunī, *Muntakhab-ut-tawārīkh*, (English transl.) G. Ranking, vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1898), p. 185. Later, the area was added to crown lands (*khālisa*) by 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī (r. 1296–1316) when he implemented his revenue and land reforms. The high regard for Amroha in this period is also attested by Moroccan traveller Ibn Battūta. He came to Amroha on official business in 1336, staying for two months. He praised it as 'a small and beautiful city'. There he met the Qāzī of Amroha, Saiyid Amīr 'Alī, and the '*shaikh* of *khānqāh*',—in all probability Shaikh Mu'īn-ud-dīn, a *khalīfah* of Shāh Wilāyat: Ibn Battūta, 'Rehla', (English transl.) Mahdi Husain, *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta (India, Maldive Islands and Ceylon)* (Baroda, 1953), p. 145. A major military encounter took place near Amroha in 1305, when the Mongol army under 'Alī Beg and Tartaq was routed; the town was then garrisoned to counter the growing Mongol menace: Baranī, *Tārikh-i-firoz shāhī*, p. 320; Badāunī, *Muntakhab-ut- tawārīkh*, vol. 1, p. 251. It remained so during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq (r. 1325–51), when troops were sent from Amroha to suppress the revolt of 'Ain-ul-Mulk; Baranī, *Tārikh-i-firoz shāhī*, p. 489.

([37]) Towards the end of Firoz Shāh's reign (r. 1351–88) the situation seems to have become volatile again and in the following years the imperial army was sent several times to restore order in the region. Expeditions were led in the region in 1418–19, 1422–3, and 1424 by the Saiyid Sultans of Delhi. Later, Sikandar Lodī stayed in the region from 1499 to 1503: M. Habib and K. A. Nizami (eds), *A Comprehensive History of India*, vol. 5 (Delhi, 1970), pp. 638–46, 694.

([38]) Zahīr-ud-dīn Muhammad Bābur, *Bābur nāmah*, (English transl.) A. S. Beveridge (London, 1969), p. 697. Babur also assigned an allowance of 30 lakhs from Amroha to Musa Farmuli: Bābur, *Bābur nāmah*, p. 685.

([39]) Husain, *Medieval Towns*, pp. 10, 13.

([40]) Abul Fazl, *Āīn-i-akbarī*, (English transl.) H. S. Jarrett, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1891), pp. 289–90.

([41]) The author of *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* provides detailed information on early grants on the authority of works like *Isrāriya* (by Saiyid Kamāl Muhammad, a descendant of Shāh Wilāyat) and *Samarāt-ul-quds* (by Lāl Beg Bakhshī). He suggests that even before the arrival of Shāh Wilāyat in the early fourteenth century, *ma'āfī* grants were given to the learned scholars of Amroha, such as the descendants of Hazrat Nizām Ganj Rawān and Qāzī Nizām-ud-dīn Quraishī. After the confiscation of land grants in the reign of 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, it was under Firoz Shāh that land grants again became common. Besides the renowned Shāh

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Wilāyat family, other families like Qāzī Zādgāns, Hazrat Turkmān, Malik Bhūran, and Sālār Ayyūb received *imlāk* and *ma'āfī* grants during the Khaljī and Tughlaq periods. The family of Nakhshbī and Banū 'Abbās got such grants during the Lodī period. The descendants of Shāh Abban Badr-i-Chisht and Maulānā Saiyid Ashraf Dānishmand were favoured during the early years of Mughal rule: Mahmūd Ahmad 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* (Delhi, 1932), pp. 296–9.

([42]) Both Mughal historical sources and family histories allude to the presence of descendants of Shāh Wilāyat in Mughal service. The most prominent among them was Mīr Saiyid Muhammad, who rose from the post of a *subahdār* of Bhakkar to become the *mīr-i-'adl* (chief judge) and a *mansabdār* of 900 during the reign of Akbar. His sons, Saiyid Abul Qāsim, Saiyid Abul Fazl, and others, served the Imperial court and received *mansab*s in return: Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire* (Delhi, 1985), pp. 4, 5, 7. *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* gives very detailed information on the *mansab*s and *jāgīr*s held by the descendants of Shāh Wilāyat, pp. 306–16. Another descendant, Dīwān Saiyid Mahmūd, served as *dīwān* of Sambhal during Aurangzeb's reign and held the largest *jāgīr* in Amroha: 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* p. 309.

([43]) There were about 993,358 *dām*s of *suyūrghāl* lands in Amroha during the reign of Akbar: Abul Fazl, *Āīn-i-akbarī*, vol. 2, pp. 289–90. Shāh Abban Badr-i-Chisht, whose family continued to enjoy tax-free grants till the end of Mughal rule, received a grant of 400 bighas from Akbar in 1575: 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, p. 301. Four years later, his son Shāh Qutbuddīn was also awarded 338 bighas of land. Another son Shāh Nūr-ud-dīn received from Jahāngīr a *ma'āfī* grant of 325 bīghās along with the *sadārat* of Sambhal and Amroha: Rizvī, *Tazkirah-i Badr-Chisht*, p. 150.

([44]) 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 301–3.

([45]) 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, p. 304.

([46]) 'Abbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, p. 340.

([47]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 16, p. 175. In terms of number of residents, Amroha was considered populous. Its population was exceeded only by Saharanpur (66,254 people) and Muradabad (75,128 people). Sambhal, with a population of 39,715 in 1901, was the closest in size to Amroha. Other towns where Sābrī networks flourished had a considerably smaller population. For instance, the order's major nineteenth-century centre Thanabhawan had a population of only 8,861 in 1901 (declined from 11,474 in 1851). Of other comparable towns, Kandhla had a population of 11,563, Jhinjhana 5,094, Deoband 20,167, Nanauta 4,567, and Gangoh 12,971 [1901 figures from Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vols 2, 3].

([48]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 16, p. 191.

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([49]) ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, p.168.

([50]) Most of the *sādāt* families of Amroha now adhere to the Shīʻa sect, but interestingly, none of their ancestors were Shīʻas. The successors of Shāh Wilāyat, Shāh Nasīr-ud-dīn Chishtī and Maulānā Maudūd Chishtī, from whom most *sādāt-i-Amroha* trace their lineage, were all Sunnis. They held the posts of *qazi* and *imam* that were given only to Sunni adherents in the Delhi Sultanate and in the Mughal empire. Even when Shīʻas migrated to India from Persia during the early years of Mughal rule, the descendants of these Sufis remained Sunnis. As suggested by the authors of *Tārīkh-i-Amroha* and *Āīna-i-ʻAbbāsī*, it seems that the conversion of *sādāt-i-Amroha* to Shīʻsm started during the period when the region came the under the influence of the Nawabs of Awadh. Nawāb Āsafuddaulah, who became wazir in 1773, sought to spread Shīʻsm; Rohilkhand came under the Nawabs in 1774. By the time of the British occupation in early nineteenth century, most of the *sādāt* families of Amroha had converted to Shīʻsm: ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 259–80.

([51]) Saiyid Nasīr-ud-dīn Chishtī, a descendant of Shaikh Badr-ud-dīn Ishāq, settled in Amroha during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. For biographical details, see ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 28–30.

([52]) ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 168, 200–13.

([53]) This is borne out by the existence of a number of family histories written in the post-1857 period, a genre of writing more or less unique to Amroha—such family histories are hardly found for any nearby *qasbah* during the same period. Such importance was attached to *sharīf* ancestry that some aspiring families in the post-1857 period began to add honorifics such as ‘Saiyid’ or ‘Shaikh’ to their family names. For a detailed study, see Jones, ‘The Local Experiences of Reformist Islam in a “Muslim” Town in Colonial India’, pp. 871–908.

([54]) Nevill, *District Gazetteers*, vol. 16, p. 185. For a list of *khānqāh*s and *dargah*s in Amroha, see ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 109–29.

([55]) Its oldest mosque dates to 1287; it was repaired and extended in 1573. Likewise, the oldest *madrasah*, constructed in the same period, continued to operate until 1726: ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 93, 139. Madrasah Maulvī Dost Muhammad (founded in Aurangzeb’s reign) continued to receive stipends and *maʻāfī* grants till the reign of Muhammad Shāh (r. 1719–48). Madrasah Tāj-ul-Madāris Sānī, with which Nawāb Viqār-ul-Mulk (d. 1917) was also associated, allowed the teaching of English language. The *ʻālim* of Deoband, Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī, founded the Madrasah-i-Islāmia to which students came from far off places, such as Bengal, Bihar, and Punjab: ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 142–3. The first Shīʻi *madrasah* soon followed these Sunni institutions, when Saiyid-ul-Madāris was established by Hakīm Amjad ʻAlī Khān in 1892. This school soon matured into an Arabic *madrasah* where some 119 students were taught by a

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staff of ten teachers: ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 144–5. Nūr-ul-Madāris (also known as Ashraf-ul-Madāris) was another Shīʻi *madrasah*. At the Imām-ul-Madāris, yet another Shīʻi *madrasah*, English classes were started in 1903, which qualified it for government assistance in 1918: ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 145–6.

([56]) For a detailed list of these *waqf*s, see ʻAbbāsī, *Tārīkh-i-Amroha*, pp. 361–6, 371–5.

([57]) For details on Shāh ʻAbdul Majīd ʻAlavī, see ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 65–8; and Shāh ʻAzd-ud-dīn Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (Tonk, 1984), pp. 407–8.

([58]) Thus for instance, Shāh Muhammadī Fayyāz (d. 1695), who started the Sābrī branch in Amroha in the late seventeenth century, went to Allahabad to receive training. He stayed there for more than a decade before travelling widely to Delhi, Agra, Panipat, Karnal, Gangoh, Muradabad, and finally settling at Amroha: Nisār ʻAlī Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazāʼin*, (ed.) Shabih Ahmad (Delhi, 1927), pp. 30–6; Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 393; ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 101–4. Similarly, Mīrān Hātim ʻAlī (d. 1829) had his early training at Delhi under Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn, after which he went to the Hijaz. On his return, he travelled widely in search of a *murshid* and then spent eleven years with Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī, and finally became the disciple and *khalīfah* of Shāh Dost Muhammad (brother of Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī): ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 171–2.

([59]) ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 163–4.

([60]) Shāh ʻĪsā had four sons: Shāh Muhammadī, Shāh ʻAbdul Jalīl (both born at Kurcha), Shāh Hāmid, and Shāh ʻAbdul Khāliq (both born at Hargam). See ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 100; and Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, pp. 391–2.

([61]) Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 391.

([62]) Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 393; Hāfiz Muhammad Husain, *Anwār-ul-ʻārifīn* (Bareilly, n.d.), p. 441; ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 102.

([63]) Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 393.

([64]) Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 15. Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq Muhaddis was a renowned Islamic scholar who travelled to Mecca and on his return taught Hadis for almost half a century. He died in 1642. For more details, see K. A. Nizami, *Hayāt-i-Shaikh ʻAbdul Haq Muhaddis Dihlawī* (Delhi, 1964).

([65]) ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 121.

([66]) ʻAbbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 121–2; Jaʻfrī, *Maqāsid-ul-ʻārifīn*, p. 15.

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([67]) Ja‘frī, *Maqāsid-ul-‘ārifīn*, p. 15.

([68]) Among them, Qāzī Nasrullāh was a renowned *‘ālim* who was made *qāzī-ul-quzzāt* (Chief Qazi). Several of his descendants served as *qāzī*s in Delhi, Punjab, Nagina, and Amroha. One of his ancestors, Muftī Muhammad Tāhir, received the tax-free village of Bawapur (in *pargana* Dhampur near Bijnor) from Akbar in 1569 and moved his family there. From that time on the family engaged in agricultural work: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 127.

([69]) It is reported that Shāh Muhammadī, while praying at Shāh Hādī’s father’s house, deviated from the *qibla* due to his eyesight problem. Shāh Hādī, then a mere four-year old, took his hand and turned him back towards the *qibla*. Shāh Muhammadī then predicted that the boy would become an eminent religious figure ‘who would guide people to the true way’: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā’in*, pp. 8–9; Muhammad Husain, *Anwār-ul-‘ārifīn*, p. 448; Mushtāq Ahmad Ambethwī, *Anwār-ul-‘āshiqīn* (Hyderabad, AH 1332), p. 81.

([70]) The family of Shaikh ‘Abdul Majīd ‘Alavī was respected in Amroha for its Sūfī leanings. Shāh Muhammadī had formed cordial connections with ‘Abdul Majīd’s *khalīfah* Saiyid ‘Abdul Hakīm (a descendant of Shāh Wilāyat) during his first visit to Amroha in 1660. On his second visit to Amroha, he married the daughter of Shaikh Faizullāh ‘Alavī (d. 1669, brother of Shaikh ‘Abdul Majīd) and decided to settle there permanently. For biographical detail on Shāh ‘Abdul Hakīm, see ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 76–81; on Shāh ‘Abdul Majīd ‘Alavī, see ibid., pp. 65–68, and Ja‘frī, *Maqāsid-ul-‘ārifīn*, pp. 407–8. The marriage is reported in Ja‘frī, *Maqāsid-ul-‘ārifīn*, pp. 394–5.

([71]) For the letters, see Subhan Allah Collection, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University. *Tārīkh-i-Hargām* suggests that his closeness with the Prince was the major reason for the estrangement from Aurangzeb.

([72]) MS. Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh. The author of *Ma‘āsir-ul-kirām* informs us that during those days it was risky just to have a copy of *Taswiya* as it had aroused such controversy: Ghulām ‘Alī Āzād Bilgrāmī, *Ma‘āsir-ul-kirām*, vol. 1 (Agra, 1910), pp. 84–5.

([73]) He was from Kannauj and had joined the court under Shāh Jahān, who discussed spiritual matters with him. Both the *‘Ālamgīr nāmah* and *Ma‘āsir-i-‘ālamgīrī* mention his performing the last rites of Shāh Jahān: Muhammad Kāzim, *‘Ālamgīr nāmah*, (eds) Khadim Husain and Abdul Hayy (Calcutta, 1868), pp. 932–3; Sāqī Musta‘id Khān, *Ma‘āsir-i-‘Ālamgīrī*, (English transl.) Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta, 1947), p. 34. Aurangzeb also respected him and discussed Ghazālī and Traditions with him. His sons also attained *mansab*s at the court. For his biographical details, see Shahnawāz Khān, *Ma‘āsir-ul-‘umarā’*, (English transl.) H. Beveridge, vol. 2 (Patna, 1972), pp. 128–33.

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([74]) Shahnawāz Khān, *Ma'āsir-ul-'umarā'*, pp. 130–1; Sher Khān Lodī, *Mirāt-ul-khayāl* (Bombay, 1906), pp. 325–6; Bilgrāmī, *Ma'āsir-ul-kirām*, vol. 1, pp. 84–5.

([75]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 106.

([76]) MS British Library, London, India Office (Delhi Persian) no. 1067a and 1167b, fols. 40a–40b.

([77]) See Nisar Ahmad Faruqi's 'Introduction' to Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, pp. 5–8.

([78]) Most of the manuscripts are held in private collections in Amroha. See Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, pp. 39–48.

([79]) Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, p. 14.

([80]) Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, p. 47.

([81]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 121–2.

([82]) Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, p. 27.

([83]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 106; Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, pp. 9, 398; also cited in Razī Ahmad Kamāl, *Hālāt-o-khidmāt mashā'ikh chishtiyyah sābriyyah*, (Delhi, 1997), p. 144.

([84]) Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn Ja'frī, *Quwwat-ul-kalām* (MS Raza Library, Rampur).

([85]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 10–17.

([86]) For biographical details, see Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 120–1.

([87]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 49–50.

([88]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 88.

([89]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 60–1.

([90]) Their mutual understanding and respect is illuminated by an episode narrated in his *malfūzāt*. Shaikh Muhammad Afzāl, who held some important administrative post in Amroha, was a *murīd* of Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn and wished his son Muhammad Mukammal to become his disciple also. The latter, however, had more faith in Shāh Hādī and told Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn about it, who smiled and said, 'I am also worthy for you.' Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn later informed Shāh Hādī about the matter. Initially Shāh Hādī refused, saying, 'How can one who does not have belief in you, have trust in me?' Later, after repeated requests, he accepted Mukammal as a disciple: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 79–80.

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([91]) Shāh Hādī's spiritual ancestor Shāh Muhammadī used to distinguish three categories of people who visited his *khānqāh*. One who was drawn towards worldly affairs and advantages was termed *banda-i-duniā* (man of the world); one more attached to the after-life was called *banda-i-akhirāt* (man of the after-life); and the third category, evidently the most favoured, comprised those who were seeking Reality (*tālib-i-haqq*) and they were called *banda-i-khudā* (man devoted to God): Ja'frī, *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn*, p. 9; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 107.

([92]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 42, 44, 82, 145, 151, 154, 172, 174, 180, 186, 187, and 193.

([93]) Shāh Hādī had stayed at Bawapur early in his life, and had performed spiritual exercises in Haziqpur. He had been trained at Amroha under Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn and had later settled in Barahi. His last days were spent at Khai Kheda near Bareilly.

([94]) He visited these places on invitation from Nawāb Duwinda Khān, Maulānā Shaikh-ul-Islām, Maulvī Muhammad Ahsan Khān, and Nawāb Amīn-ud-daulā: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*.

([95]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 202–3.

([96]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 62–4, 150–1.

([97]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 97–100, 180–2, 215–6.

([98]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 194.

([99]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 193–4.

([100]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 154–6.

([101]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 134–6.

([102]) Among others, a Jat woman of Bawapur named Mahanam, a rich merchant named Bhakku Banjara, a Brahmin,and a wife of the *hākim* of Sherkot pargana, named Mīr Sadr-ud-dīn Khān, are mentioned as requesting prayers for offspring: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 43, 44, 45, 97, 182.

([103]) Although Shāh Hādī himself belonged to a family involved in agriculture for generations, the advice sought was due to people's faith in him as a religious figure rather than to his family background. Relatives of his disciples Muhammad Mukammal and Karāmat Khān sought prayers for agricultural purposes. The governor of Muradabad also came to the *khānqāh* with similar requests: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 55, 56, 86, 94, 156.

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([104]) Most of these requests were made to seek refuge from Maratha incursions; a number of his Afghan disciples came with such requests when Rohilkhand was attacked by Marathas. However, there is also one mention of *fauj-i-wilāyat*, referring to British forces from whom people requested Shāh Hādī to pray that Hindustan may remain safe: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 68–70, 73, 83, 172, 174.

([105]) A number of his *murīd*s in the *Qazi tola muhalla* of Bareilly requested him for prayers: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 98, 214, 215, 217–21.

([106]) Shāh Hādī solved a land dispute of Mīr Asadullāh Khān (Mīr Kallū) and 'Alī A'zam Khān, who were among the *sādāt-i-Amroha*. He was involved in solving marriage issues of people such as Barati, Ashraf, and Hāfiz Ghulām. A Brahmin also came to him for prayers to free his father who was jailed for inability to pay taxes: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 98, 100, 158, 180, 184.

([107]) Two brothers of Muhammad Mukammal, a *murīd* of Shāh Hādī, sought his prayers for posts in the government: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 86, 104, 176–8; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 134–36.

([108]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 58, 75, 87, 99, 105–6, 182, 185.

([109]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 41, 56, 98, 174, 180, 182, 184; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 36; Kamāl, *Hālāt-o-khidmāt mashā'ikh chishtiyyah sābriyyah*, p. 172. *Wazīfah-i-abjad* was a special incantation of the Chishtī order and his great grandson Shāh Rahmān Bakhsh (d. 1863) practised it in his daily routine. His *malfūzāt* contain a full list of *wazīfah*s to be recited on different days during *zikr* in different situations: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 111–43.

([110]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 41, 180–2.

([111]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 104–7.

([112]) A manuscript of this work was in the possession of Nisar Ahmad Faruqi of Amroha: Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 107–8.

([113]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 132.

([114]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 132.

([115]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 133; Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 186–7.

([116]) As cited in Kamāl, *Hālāt-o-khidmāt mashā'ikh chishtiyyah sābriyyah*, p. 171.

([117]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 169; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 131–2.

([118]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 170.

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([119]) Mirzā Mazhar also had contacts in Amroha. The sources mention one Hanīfullāh who was a *khalīfah* of Mirzā Mazhar at Amroha: N'aīmullāh Bahrāichī, *Ma'mūlāt-i-mazharī* or *Bashārāt-i-mazhariyah* (rotograph, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University), fol. 126a.

([120]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 152–3; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 130; Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, 'Introduction', *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (Delhi, 1981), p. 46.

([121]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 199–200.

([122]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 137.

([123]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 138.

([124]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 138.

([125]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 90, 94.

([126]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 138–9.

([127]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 137.

([128]) 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 137.

([129]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 203–4.

([130]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 77.

([131]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 207.

([132]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 81–2.

([133]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 71–2; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 139; For biographical details of Shāh Nizām-ud-dīn Suhrawardī, see 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 111.

([134]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, pp. 200, 201, 205, 211.

([135]) He was a scholar of Hadis and a student of Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn.

([136]) Bukhārī, *Miftāh-ul-khazā'in*, p. 168; 'Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 139; Thānwī, 'Introduction', *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 47. For further details, see Hājī Rafī'-ud-dīn Khān's *Safarnāma-i-Haramain* translated into Urdu and published in *al-Furqān* by Nasīm Ahmad Farīdī.

([137]) Shāh Hādī died at Khai Kheda in 1776 and his body was later moved to Amroha and buried in a family garden.

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([138]) ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 140–1.

([139]) Shāh Dost Muhammad rarely visited Amroha and worked at Barahi, where he also laid the foundation of the ‘*urs* tradition of his grandfather. His initial education had been both from Shāh ‘Azd-ud-dīn and Miān Mauj, who taught him *fiqh* and Hadis; later Shāh ‘Abdul Hādī trained him in mystic exercises (*riyāzāt*). Although he developed traits of ecstatic Sufism, the sources portray him as a strict adherent of religious rituals. He used to say that a true Sufi teacher is one who is an expert in Sharī‘at, *tarīqat*, and *haqīqat* and that a true dervish is one who neither longs for the world nor for the after-life but is always attentive to the commands of God and has nothing to do with things other than Reality (*ghair haq*)’: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 160. For biographical details, see Muhammad Husain, *Anwār-ul-‘ārifīn*, p. 451.

([140]) ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 159.

([141]) Muhammad Husain, *Anwār-ul-‘ārifīn*, p. 450; ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 163; Ambethwī, *Anwār-ul-‘āshiqīn*, p. 81.

([142]) This was a saying attributed to Shaikh Farīd-ud-dīn Mas‘ūd: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 166.

([143])

> ‘If you wish that your heart should be clear as a mirror,
> You should throw away ten things from inside your breast,
> Greed, desires, anger, falsehood and backbiting,
> Miserliness, malice, hypocrisy, pride and rancour.’

‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 167.

([144]) An interesting incident shows how he once tested both these qualities in two people who wished to become his disciples. He asked them if he were to order them to do something which is against the Sharī‘at, would they do so. One of them replied in the negative, the other in the affirmative. Shāh Bārī agreed to take the latter in his discipline because he had trusted that a *shaikh-i-kāmil* (accomplished *shaikh*) would never ask him to do anything against the Sharī‘at: Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Qisas-ul-akābir* (Lahore, n.d.), p. 12.

([145]) Thānwī, *Qisas-ul-akābir*, p. 164.

([146]) Shāh ‘Abdul Rahmān, *Anwār-ur-rahmān*; cited in ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 165–6.

در امروہہ آمدہ در خانقاہ شاہ عبدالباری صاحب قریب شش ماہ قیام نمودہ ، از ارواج بزرگان امروہہ

اتفاق استفادہ شد

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([147]) ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 176.

([148]) Abul Khair Muhammad (ed.), *Kalimāt-i-tayyibāt* (Muradabad, 1891); ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 164–5. The incident is so much remembered that the successors at the *khānqāh* have preserved a *charpoy* which was reportedly used by Mirzā Mazhar during his stay at Amroha.

([149]) Qur’ān (55:60)

([150]) ‘Shaikh ‘Abdul Bārī is one step ahead of me on every stage of the mystical journey’: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 165.

([151]) ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 165.

([152]) For biographical details, see ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 171–2; the author quotes an interesting poem attributed to Mīrān Hātim ‘Alī, in which he writes of his travels in highly overblown terms.

([153]) The rest of his life was spent in Amroha. After his death he was buried next to the grave of his spiritual mentor, Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī.

([154]) For biographical details, see ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, pp. 176–84. He was favourably inclined towards possession of land and Shāh ‘Ālam had given him a *madad-i-ma‘āsh* in a village of Raipur and a mansab of 200 *zāt* and 20 *sawār*. The land remained in his family for a considerable time: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 181.

([155]) It is reported that the Maulānā happened to arrive at the *khānqāh* while Shāh Ghulām was holding a *samā‘*. On seeing him, he forbade the singer (*qawwāl*) to continue. Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī apologized, saying ‘I have become an obstruction in your assembly of *samā‘*,’ to which Shāh Ghulām replied that he has merely followed the practice of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliyā’ who would interrupt a *samā‘* whenever Hazrat Raushan Chirāgh Dihlawī visited him. Maulānā Qāsim then asked to hear something in the assembly and the *qawwāl* was asked to sing an encomium to the Prophet, which he relished so much that he rewarded the *qawwāl* before leaving: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 209. Nawāb Viqār-ul-Mulk of Amroha, who is counted among the founding fathers of M.A.O. College at Aligarh, was also in touch with Shāh Ghulām Mustafā: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 208.

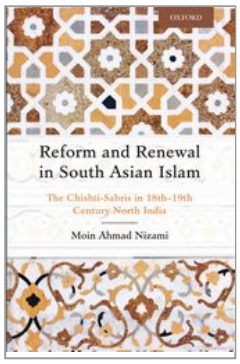
([156]) A rich man of Sambhal, Nawāb Shams-ud-dīn Khān, once gave him 10 *biswa* of land in the village of Shahbazpur: ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 208.

([157]) ‘Abbāsī, *Tazkirat-ul-kirām*, p. 207.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Reformist ‘Ulamā and the Chishtī-Sābrī Leadership (ca. 1800–57)

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter 4 focuses on the growing interaction between the Chishti-Sabris and the Delhi reformers during the early nineteenth century. During this period, the earlier connections with the Waliullahi scholars of Delhi were strongly reinforced with the launching of the Tariqa-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad of Rae Bareilly. By demonstrating the Sufi antecedents of Tariqa-i-Muhammadia, its close association with the Waliullahi traditions, and its extensive popularity in the *qasbah*s of upper Doab, this chapter questions the historiography which has raised doubts as to the popularity of this movement and its linkages with Waliullahi *‘ulamā*. The movement also had a deep impact on the future development of the Sabri order, and for many, association with Saiyid Ahmad, either direct or claimed, became a source of legitimate authority. Under the leadership of Abdul Rahim Fatimi (d. 1830), Nur Muhammad (d. 1843) and Haji Imdadullah (d. 1899), the Chishti-Sabri order provided a vibrant and adaptive leadership for South Asian Muslims.

Keywords: Tariqa-i-Muhammadia, Mujahidin, Waliullahi ulama, Saiyid Ahmad Barelwi, Chishti-Sabri, Haji Imdadullah

While the Khānqāh-i-Hādwia continued to flourish in Amroha and successfully forged connections with the Delhi Naqshbandīs, another branch of the Chishtī-Sābrī order moved out of Amroha around the beginning of the nineteenth century and established itself in the Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur districts. This branch illustrates well the adaptability of the Chishtī-Sābrī order and its successful assimilation of Walīullāhi traditions into its teaching and functioning.

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It was also in the nineteenth century that the *ihyā’-o-tajdīd* movements, led by Sūfī scholars such as Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, Saiyid Ahmad of Rae Bareily, Shāh Fakhr-ud-dīn, Shāh Ghulām ‘Alī, and others, were becoming more pronounced in Delhi and its environs. In a volatile political situation, Muslim scholars were submitting religious thought to a process of *tatbīq*. They strove to redefine the identity of a ‘true’ Muslim and exemplify it in their own lives; they tested the practices, beliefs, and rituals of both the masses and the religious **(p.160)** elite against the touchstone of Qur’ān, Hadīs, and Sharī‘at. In this process, the distinctions between Sūfīs and *‘ulamā* became increasingly blurred. The growing interaction in this period between the Chishtī-Sābrī order and the Walīullāhī scholars, facilitated by the creation of familial and scholarly networks, must be understood against this background.

It was Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī (d. 1830) who established a base for the order in the Muzaffarnagar–Saharanpur belt of Upper Doab. He came from the Hazara region of Afghanistan and had moved to Panjlasa (near Ambala) towards the end of the eighteenth century. There he joined the Qādirī order under Shāh Raham ‘Alī (d. 1789).[1] After his *murshid*’s death, he travelled through Punjab, Saharanpur, Sadhaura, Muzaffarnagar, and reached Amroha, where he was initiated into the Chishtī-Sābrī order by Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī.[2] After the latter’s death he probably moved to Saharanpur where he met Saiyid Ahmad, who initiated him into the Naqshbandī order. Thus, in Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm were combined the teachings of three different Sūfī orders—the Qādirī, Chishtī, and Naqshbandī. The accounts of his life suggest that, though essentially a Chishtī-Sābrī, he was deeply influenced by the revivalist movement of Saiyid Ahmad. Indeed, most of the information we have about him relates to his involvement in the Mujāhidīn movement, while comparatively little is recorded about his mystical training or his role as a Sūfī *shaikh*. He served the Mujāhidīn army at Pakhli (in Hazara territory) and died fighting against the Sikhs in the Battle of Mayar in 1830.[3]

(p.161) The next important figure in this line of Chishtī-Sābrīs was Miānjī Nūr Muhammad of Jhinjhana (d. 1844), who belonged to the well-known family of Shāh ‘Abdul Razzāq Jhinjhānwī (d. 1542). Nūr Muhammad is said to have visited Delhi briefly in 1806, but we do not have detailed information about his studies.[4] On his return from Delhi, he settled at Lohari, a village near Jhinjhana, and started teaching students in a local mosque. We do not know if his formal education was under the guidance of someone who carried the legacy of Shāh Walīullāh, but his training in *sulūk* was done by teachers influenced by the Walīullāhī school of thought. His first *murshid* was Shāh Ihsān ‘Alī Patanī (d. 1818), whom he met at Jalalabad and who left such a deep impression on Nūr Muhammad that he used to say, ‘As long as I do not perform the *ashghāl* (mystic exercises and practices) given to me by Shāh Ihsān ‘Alī, I do not feel satisfied.’[5] After Shāh Ihsān’s death, Nūr Muhammad joined Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī and received *khilāfat* in the Chishtī-Sābrī order from him. Around the same time, he

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gave a *bai‘at-i-jihādī* (an initiatory oath committing to jihad) to Saiyid Ahmad, who was then touring Saharanpur.[6] His spiritual training connected him to the following four branches of Sūfī orders: **(p.162)**

Table 4.1 Multiple Affiliations of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad Jhinjhānwī

Qādirī- Mujaddidī	Naqshbandī, Chishtī, and Qādirī- Quddūsī	Chishtī-Sābrī	Qādirī-Qamīsī
Mīr Muhammad ↓ Shāh Abādānī (Delhi, d. 1805) ↓ Shāh Ihsān ‘Alī (d. 1818) ↓ Nūr Muhammad (*bai‘at* between 1808 and 1816)	Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1762) ↓ Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz(d. 1823) ↓ Saiyid Ahmad Barelwī (d. 1830) ↓ Nūr Muhammad (*bai‘at-i-jihādī* around 1818)	Shāh ‘Abdul Hādī (d. 1776) ↓ Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī (d. 1811) ↓ ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī (d. 1830) ↓ Nūr Muhammad (*khilāfat* around 1817–18)	Shāh ‘Abdul Razzāq ↓ Shāh Raham ‘Alī (d. 1789) ↓ ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī (d. 1830) ↓ Nūr Muhammad (*khilāfat* around 1817–18)

***Source*: Based on Nasim Ahmad Alavi, *Sawanih Mianji Nur Muhammad*.**

Nūr Muhammad’s three leading successors—Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī (d. 1878),[7] Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd (d. 1857),[8] and Hājī Imdādullāh (d. 1899)—turned Thanabhawan into a focal point of the order. Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī was known as an *‘ālim*, a strict follower of Sharī‘at, and an eminent scholar of *‘ulūm-i-zāhirī*. At the age of seven, he met **(p.163)** Saiyid Ahmad and took *bai‘at-i-tabarruk* (honorary initiation) from him.[9] He studied in Delhi and received a *sanad* (certificate) in Hadīs from Shāh Muhammad Ishāq (d. 1846), grandson of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz. Later, he went on hajj and received another *sanad* in *Sahīh Sitta* from Shāh Muhammad Ya‘qūb (brother of Shāh Muhammad Ishāq), along with a *khirqa* of the Naqshbandī order.[10] He was so particular about Sharī‘at that initially he was not in favour of joining any *murshid* and hesitated to enter into any *pīr–murīd* relationship.[11] He believed, ‘one should be afraid lest, in the hope of attaining *‘irfān* and *wasl*, one loses his *īmān* [faith], which is the main source for salvation and success’.[12] The narratives regarding his joining the discipleship of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad vary, but they all agree on one point: that Muhammad Thānwī wished to join a *pīr* who was meticulous about Sharī‘at, and it is only when he affirmed this quality in Nūr Muhammad that he became his *murīd*.[13] He was subsequently admitted to the Chishtī-Sābrī, Naqshbandī, and Qādirī orders by Miānjī Nūr Muhammad.

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The most celebrated successor of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad was Hājī Imdādullāh. He was born in 1817 at his maternal home in Nanauta, but spent most of his early years in Thanabhawan. Both places had been active centres of Walīullāhi scholarship. At age sixteen he went to Delhi along **(p.164)** with Maulānā Mamlūk ʿAlī (d. 1851, a great Walīullāhī scholar and head of the Oriental Section of the Delhi College) and, though his studies were left incomplete, he benefitted for the opportunity to study under some of the leading expositors of Walīullāhī thought. His interest in mysticism drew him towards Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn Dihlawī (a *khalīfah* of Shāh Muhammad ‘Āfāq and a participant in the Mujāhidīn movement), who granted him *khilāfat* in the Naqshbandī order. On his return from Delhi, he joined Miānjī Nūr Muhammad and became his premier successor at Thanabhawan. Hājī Imdādullāh’s first hajj in 1845 gave him the chance to learn from Shāh Muhammad Ishāq and other scholars in Mecca. On his return, he settled along with Hāfiz Zāmin and Muhammad Thānwī at the Pīr Muhammad Wālī mosque in Thanabhawan and began training disciples. After 1857, Hājī Imdādullāh emigrated to Mecca where he died in 1899 after creating a strong legacy in India, which earned him the title of *Shaikh-ul-ʿarab-waʾl-ʿajam* (‘The Shaikh of the Arabs and the non-Arabs’).

Hājī Imdādullāh’s life and activities mark the high point of reformist trends in the Chishtī-Sābrī order. Being a follower of the core mystic practices of the Chishtīs, he had the accomplishment (*kamāl*) and knowledge (*ʿilm-i-bātinī*) that made the *ʿulamā* flock to him.[14] The accommodation in Sūfī–*ʿālim* traditions is best exemplified among some of his disciples. Although not taught according to the standards of the time, his charisma and mystical insight were sufficient to attract to him some of the most esteemed *ʿulamā* of the period. The sheer number of religious scholars who joined Hājī Imdādullāh was unprecedented in the history of the order. Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim (d. 1880), one of his earliest disciples and the founder of Dārul ‘ulūm (Deoband), when asked if Hājī Imdādullāh was an *ʿālim*, replied, ‘What is the meaning of [his] being an *ʿālim*, when God has made him an *ʿālim-gar* (scholar-maker)?’[15] Another of his *khalīfah*s, Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī, on being asked why the *ʿulamā* turned to Hājī Imdādullāh, replied: ‘We [the *ʿulamā*] have only the words, but he possesses their meanings.’[16]

Hājī Imdādullāh enjoyed spiritual linkages with different Sūfī orders and, moreover, combined in himself their different virtues. His major **(p.165)** work on mysticism, *Ziāʾ-ul-qulūb*, presents his various spiritual genealogies (*shajra*s) and also explains the spiritual exercises in different branches of the Chishtī, Qādirī, Naqshbandī, and Suhrawardī orders.[17] His high regard for Sunnat and Sharīʿat reflect the teachings of the Naqshbandī order, while his writings and poetry, overflowing with the passions of *ʿishq-i-ilāhī*, indicate the influence of Chishtī precepts. Among his disciples, some were great *ʿulamā*, *mujaddid*s, and preachers, and others were devoted to spiritual development and to a life of solitude and poverty. His disciples were trained in *ʿulūm-i-zāhirī* on the pattern of

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Ghazālī, but his teachings on cosmic emotion drew on the works of Ibn ‘Arabī and Jalāl-ud-dīn Rūmī.

Hājī Imdādullāh’s letters and other works bring out his anxiety to maintain unity and accord among Muslims. He was not in favour of *munāzarah* (competitive debate) and repeatedly urged his devotees to avoid sectarianism. *Faisla haft mas’la* was written to this end and explained seven controversial practices and issues frequently debated during the nineteenth century.[18] Hājī Imdādullāh’s legacy was also in the field of Muslim education. His *khalīfah*s in India contributed to the establishment of Dārul ‘ulūm in Deoband, Nadwatul *‘ulamā* in Lucknow, Madrasah-i-Qāsmī in Muradabad, and Mazāhirul ‘ulūm in Saharanpur.

Hājī Imdādullāh’s presence in Thanabhawan invigorated the Chishtī-Sābrī establishment in north Indian towns. Thanabhawan served as a major seat of the order until the Uprising in 1857 led to such an unsettled situation that many scholars and Sūfis were forced to migrate or seek refuge elsewhere. Hājī Imdādullāh himself was one of many who migrated to the Hijaz. Prior to his migration, the Pīr Muhammad Wālī masjid (mosque) at Thanabhawan, where Imdādullāh had settled along with Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd and Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī, served as Khānqāh-i-imdādiya. From the *malfūzāt* of Imdādullāh it is clear that so many visitors and students attended the *khānqāh* that it came to be known as ‘*dukān-i-ma‘rifat*’ (workshop of *ma‘rifat*).[19] The following two passages, one from Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī and the other from Hakīm Muhammad ‘Umar (a disciple of Muhammad Thānwī), give a picturesque view of the **(p.166)** atmosphere which prevailed in the *khānqāh* during this period. Ashraf ‘Ali Thānwī writes:

> Glory be to God! What a gathering it used to be! In the flourishing Pīr Muhammad Wālī mosque, all day and night only the names of God and Prophet would be heard. In the last quarter of the night *zikr-i-jahr* [audible *zikr*] was practised in a way that even the negligent were charmed by it.[20]

Hakīm Muhammad ‘Umar gives the following account of the same:

> Glory be to God! There was a time when this mosque was a place of worship for eminent scholars, men of religion and those with purified souls [*nafs*] […]. In the northern chamber [*hujrah*] lived Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd, always preoccupied with the remembrance of God. In a *sih-darī* on the south resided Hājī Imdādullāh teaching the word of God and His Prophet [*qāl-allāh wa qāl-rasūl*]. In the eastern chamber our *murshid* [Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī] spent his day giving lessons and sermons to students or in contemplation [*mushāhidāt*], engrossed in *sultān-i-zikr*, always mindful of the Sunnat of the Prophet, mixing with people but keeping his inner [*bātin*] self connected to the Almighty. All three belonged to the same [Fārūqī] lineage and were the disciples of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad

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> Jhinjhānwī. Each one considered the other as superior to himself and therefore a new aspirant for *bai‘at* would be sent by one *shaikh* to the other. Day and night, five to seven students remained engaged in their lessons. One disciple would be receiving spiritual nourishment through *zikr* while another engaged in the recitation of the Qur’ān. There were devotees whose hearts received warmth through *shughl* [work] and their breasts were stirred through recitation of the Names of God [*ism-i-zāt-i-haq*]. Some would be seen busy in the *zikr* of *bārāh-tasbīh* or concentrating through *zikr-i-khafī* [silent *zikr*] and *zikr-i-jahr* [loud *zikr*]; while some would be immersed in the chanting of *durūd* or *wazīfah*s [incantations comprising Qur’ānic verses] or in the performance of *nawāfil* [voluntary prayers]; some reciting the Qur’ān, lost in *murāqaba* [meditation], studying *tafsīr* [Qur’ānic exegesis], narrating Hadīs or studying *‘usūl-i-fiqh* [principles of jurisprudence]; some traversing the stages of *durveshī*, or attesting the stations and grades of *tasawwuf* […]. When other disciples such as Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī, Kamāl-ud-dīn Chartāwalī, Hakīm Ziā’-ud-dīn Rāmpurī or Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī would visit, they made the place even livelier […].[21]

(p.167) From the above account, it is clear that the *khānqāh* also served as a *madrasah* where Hadīs, *fiqh*, and Qur’ān were taught and both the *zāhir* and *bātin*, the outward and inward expressions of religion, were nurtured. This integration of *khānqāh* and *madrasah* at Thanabhawan was made possible by the close networking of *‘ulamā* and Sūfīs, which blurred the distinctions between the two institutions of Islamic learning. Two important factors led to this transformation in the Chishtī-Sābrī order: firstly, the association with Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia and the influence it wielded over the Sūfī orders and the religious milieu of *qasbah*s of Upper Doab; and secondly the role of the Walīullāhī *‘ulamā* as teachers of Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s.

The Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia

The religio-political movement that emerged among South Asian Muslims in the early nineteenth century came to be known as Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia or the Mujāhidīn movement. It was arguably the most significant activist movement initiated in north India, aspiring to religious reform and a struggle against ‘internal decline and external encroachment’.[22] It proved a precursor to the Sānūsīs in Libya (1842), the Mahdavīs in Sudan (1881), and the work of Shaikh Hādī Najmābādī in Iran (1890).[23] It was significant because of the wide areas of internal reform that it dealt with, and because it was probably the first movement in India to emphasize activism in the form of jihad in order to achieve its goals. Moreover, its effects were felt, directly or indirectly, on numerous other contemporary religious movements of renewal and revitalization.

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Saiyid Ahmad, the main initiator of this movement, was born to a Saiyid family of Rae-Bareilly in 1786. He received his early schooling **(p.168)** at home. Then, in 1806, he visited Delhi, where he studied under Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz for six months and Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir (both sons of Shāh Walīullāh) for a couple of years, and was enrolled in the Chishtī, Qādirī, and Naqshbandī orders. Around 1812, with the permission of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, he moved to Tonk, where he joined the army of Nawāb Āmir Khān and served him for some years. When he returned to Delhi in 1816, he quickly became popular among the ‘*ulamā*. From this time onwards he devoted himself to his programme of revival, which he personally led for more than a decade. He began by touring several *qasbah*s of the Doab. This proved instrumental in establishing his authority and popularity in the small towns where many scholarly Muslim families resided, who provided active support for his subsequent campaigns. In 1821, Saiyid Ahmad proceeded via Calcutta to Mecca for hajj and returned in 1823, after which he busied himself in collecting funds and making active preparation for the jihad that he had been planning for a few years. With the intention of jihad, he migrated to the northwest frontier in 1826 and the very next year assumed a caliphal title of *amīr-ul-muminīn*. The jihad began first against the Sikhs and the war waxed and waned but before it could reach its conclusion, Saiyid Ahmad was killed in a battle at Balakot in 1831.[24] The movement, however, outlived Saiyid Ahmad and after his death its centre shifted to Sittana and Patna. When the East India Company annexed Punjab in 1849, the Mujāhidīn came into direct conflict with the British. They remained **(p.169)** active throughout the 1850s and it was only in the 1860s, after a series of trials, that the British managed to bring an end to the flow of money and men to the frontier.

Much has been written on the jihad of Saiyid Ahmad and we need not go into its details here. It is the reformist message of the Muhammadīs and their linkages in *qasbah*s that are more central to our enquiry.[25] Jihad was only one item on Saiyid Ahmad’s programme of *ihyā’-o-tajdīd*. The central theme of Muhammadī writings is not jihad as such, but the eradication of religious abuses, with emphasis on individual responsibility. It was Saiyid Ahmad’s efforts for internal reform within Indo–Islamic society, and the methods and plans of action adopted to achieve it, that proved consequential in the long run. The two principal of his internal reforms were: to promote the pure religion of Islam, or ‘*al-dīn al-khālis*’, to reveal its real truths and meanings; and to create a Muslim community or leadership (*jamā‘at*) that would be living embodiment of the true faith. To achieve the first aim, he launched a war against *shirk* and *bid‘at* by advocating ‘*amal bi’l Qur’ān wa’l Hadīs* (actions according to the Qur’ān and Hadīs) and by popularizing *tauhīd* and Sunnat. The second aim was achieved through Saiyid Ahmad’s travels in various *qasbah*s where numerous scholars, Sūfīs, and ordinary people joined him. What is important in the movement is the fact that it was the first attempt to revive Muslim fortunes without looking to the ruling elites for support. Instead, through his travels, Saiyid Ahmad attempted to

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mobilize the support of the Muslim intelligentsia and the common people. Also significant is the extensive use by the movement of printing and preaching through popular writings and Urdu tracts.[26]

(p.170) The two major works that provide the core of the reformist message are *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm*[27]and *Taqwiyat-ul-īmān*.[28] The fundamental aim of these texts was to promote strict monotheism and absolute unity of God (*tauhīd*) by stamping out *shirk* (associating partners with God) and *bid‘at* (religious innovations).[29] It is important to note that, while criticizing cultural borrowings from Hinduism, the movement’s leaders were not opposed to Hinduism *per se*. Shāh Ismā‘īl was tolerant to learned Hindus since he felt ‘they are the source of flow (sacredness); but later evil ideas mingle in the stream of a religion, obscene rites predominate, **(p.171)** and commentaries become wrong and corrupt, and the mind is no longer able to grasp the reality as originally revealed to knowledge’.[30] Moreover, a number of Hindus are mentioned in the sources among those who helped the Mujāhidīn or offered them hospitality.[31] It is no less important to note that, in spite of their trenchant criticism of several customs and practices of the Indo-Muslim community, the Muhammadīs aimed at cohesiveness and solidarity among Muslims. They differed markedly from the Wahhābīs of Arabia in this regard.[32] They did not condemn fellow Muslims as apostates or polytheists, but simply as *bid‘atī* and ignorant. The idea was to reform Muslims from within, to win them over by gradual persuasion and personal example, and not to alienate any section by over-emphasizing differences or anathematizing them.

Impact of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia

Although much has been written about the ideology of the Muhammadia movement, little has been done to study its impact on different Sūfī institutions.[33] Much polemic has been expended on this movement, with its critics dubbing it as Wahhābī and linking its key themes to the writings of ‘Abdul Wahhāb.[34] It is at times assumed that since the movement **(p.172)** attacked Sūfī customs so vigorously, its leaders were not positively inclined towards Sūfī institutions. The genesis of Saiyid Ahmad’s thought has been a subject of debate and questions have been raised regarding his indebtedness to Delhi scholars, Shāh Walīullāh, and Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz. Although his jihad failed to yield the desired results, his reform programme was indeed significant in creating a legacy.

Links with the Walīullāhī ‘ulamā: The ideological roots of the movement can be traced to Shāh Walīullāh. Saiyid Ahmad came into contact with the Walīullāhī *‘ulamā* when he arrived at Delhi and joined the Madrasah-i-Rahīmia. His family already had close relations with the Walīullāhī scholars: his father and elder brother had been students of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz. His great grandfather Shāh ‘Ilmullāh had established a *madrasah* known as Dā’irah-i-Shāh ‘Ilmullāh in Rae-Bareilly, to propagate the teachings of Shāh Walīullāh.[35] Saiyid Ahmad also

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studied (as noted above) under Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir and received *khilāfat* in the Naqshbandī, Qādirī, and Chishtī orders. Although he did not excel in formal studies, he displayed an inclination towards spiritual exercises and social activity. While in Delhi, he managed to attain a good grounding in Qur’ān, Hadīs, Arabic, and Persian.[36] Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz housed him in Akbarabadi mosque and even assigned his own disciples to him for training. That Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, in a letter to Munshī Na‘īm, did not deny the possibility of Saiyid Ahmad being an *abdāl* (a very high rank in the Sūfī spiritual lexicon) affirms that he was an accomplished Sūfī master, trained in *kashfī* (intuitive) sciences by the two successors of Shāh Walīullāh.[37]

Whether or not Saiyid Ahmad was acting on the specific instructions of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz in carrying out his reforms and jihad is a moot point.[38] **(p.173)** Charles Adams suggests that Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz never fostered any anti-British political movement and never intended to declare jihad against the British. He claims that since both men differed in temperament, Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz being a learned scholar of religion and Saiyid Ahmad being a ‘robust and restless soldier’, ‘one cannot imagine a strong natural bond of sympathy between the two’. He concludes that Saiyid Ahmad’s background differed from that of Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, and interprets his career as an outcome ‘of a unique personality of particular dynamism in interaction with a special set of circumstances’, concluding that ‘the existence of a common religious-political objective running in continuity through the thought and activity of these men is not so easily discerned’.[39] David Damrel also denies any direct influence of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz on Saiyid Ahmad and writes that the former’s ‘Indian disciples remained apart from the mujāhidīn movement and instead followed his example of tacit cooperation with the British’.[40] Those who support this view also point to instances when Saiyid Ahmad disapproved certain practices that Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz taught, such as *tasawwur-i-shaikh*.[41]

However, these differences were only minor and do not outweigh the evidence of close links between Saiyid Ahmad and those who continued the legacy of Shāh Walīullāh. Moreover, it is the case that, from the time of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, *‘ulamā* of Walīullāhī traditions held diverse positions—some supported political struggle and desired jihad to challenge colonial interventions; some remained aloof and wanted to spread religion through peaceful preaching; and some held that Muslims were not in a position to wage war and it might be detrimental for the community. In sum, there were a range of positions compatible with the Walīullāhī legacy.

For sure, association with the esteemed Madrasah-i-Rahīmia and the heirs of Shāh Walīullāh enhanced the authority of Saiyid Ahmad. Contemporary accounts tell us that Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz gave all support and encouragement to him. Saiyid Ahmad’s letters written from Tonk **(p.174)** and Mecca show that, even after he had finished his education, he maintained close relations with Shāh ‘Abdul

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‘Azīz.[42] Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz also wrote letters to different scholars before Saiyid Ahmad commenced his tours of *qasbah*s and he directed his grandsons Shāh Muhammad Ishāq and Shāh Muhammad Ya‘qūb to undergo spiritual training under Saiyid Ahmad. Many of the relatives of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz took *bai‘at* at the hands of Saiyid Ahmad, including his cousin Muhammad Yūsuf Phulatī and his son-in-law Maulānā ‘Abdul Hayy (d. 1828).[43] Some students of Madrasah-i-Rahīmia also joined Saiyid Ahmad’s campaign. Particularly significant was the allegiance of Muhammad Ismā‘īl (d. 1830), nephew of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz.[44] He, along with ‘Abdul Hayy, became the chief spokesmen of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia. Both were accomplished scholars and orators who made frequent speeches (*wā‘z*) on Qur’ānic exegesis, on denunciation of customary practices, and other issues central to their reform programme. Muhammad Ismā‘īl’s initiation into Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia gained for the movement an effective spokesman for reform and the legitimation of a prominent scholar and descendant of Shāh Walīullāh.

It could even be argued that Saiyid Ahmad tried to put the political hopes of Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz into practice. Shāh Walīullāh indicates such hope (albeit in a conditional way) in his *Tafhīmāt-i-ilāhiya*:

> If the demands of the age in which this man is living were such that conditions could be reformed by fighting and he was accordingly inspired, he would certainly have made all necessary arrangements and taken up arms. He might thus have proved himself a leader far superior to Rustam and Isfandyār in the art of war.[45]

While Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz were absorbed in the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam, men capable of practical struggle did come forward within half a century and from within their own circle. Saiyid Ahmad was one of the main leaders of this group. M. A. Bari rightly remarks: ‘there was hardly anything in his political or religious teachings **(p.175)** that could not be traced to Shāh Walīullāh and Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz. The only difference was that whereas they were great men of learning who chose to serve the pen and word, Syed Ahmad Shahid was primarily a man of action’.[46] In *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm*, Shāh Walīullāh is frequently referred to and his Sūfī terminology is freely employed to explain the stages and experiences of *sulūk*.[47] Marc Gaborieau thus rightly points out that Saiyid Ahmad’s movement, in doctrine and in practice, did not fundamentally break from the traditions of Shāh Walīullāh and other great Naqshbandī Sūfīs of eighteenth century-Delhi.[48] There are several instances that attest a close networking of Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia with the family of Shāh Walīullāh. To a great extent the Muhammadia movement proved to be instrumental in popularizing the Walīullāhī thought in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab.

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Impact on the qasbahs of Doab: One of the key features of the movement was the planned tours which Saiyid Ahmad made prior to starting his campaign of jihad. Writing about the significance of these tours, Barbara Metcalf notes, the Mujahidin

> used all scholarly networks centred in Delhi which provided them contacts with students and other ‘ulamā from a wider area. Through this network they were tied to members of important religious families of rural towns or *qasbah*s of the Upper Doab and even beyond […]. Not only did religious scholars come to Delhi from the countryside, but the reformers themselves travelled carrying their message to ‘ulamā and common people alike.[49]

Around the year 1817, Saiyid Ahmad set himself to expand his network of disciples and at the suggestion of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, planned a tour of the entire Doab. Muhammad Ismā‘īl and Maulānā ‘Abdul Hayy, who had joined his discipline and had familial connections in the region, were able to popularize Saiyid Ahmad. Before Saiyid Ahmad embarked on this itinerary, Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz wrote letters to various people, informing **(p.176)** them that Saiyid Ahmad was his disciple, thus implicitly requesting all help and hospitality for him.[50] The initial tour of the Doab lasted for about six months (1817–18) and several *qasbah*s were covered.[51] In 1818, Saiyid Ahmad was back in Delhi, but soon left for his hometown Rae-Bareilly on hearing of his brother’s death. He travelled via Ghaziuddin Nagar (modern Ghaziabad), Hapur, Garhmuktesar, Amroha, Muradabad, and Rampur.[52] He stayed at Rae-Bareilly till 1820, but even during this period he toured Mahroda, Ihladganj, Allahabad, Salon, Benaras, Sultanpur, Lucknow, and Kanpur.[53] Another series of tours began in 1820, when he planned to go for hajj.[54]

Saiyid Ahmad was accompanied on these tours by a number of his closest companions and enrolled new disciples along the way. The allegiance (*bai‘at*) he accepted served a higher purpose than simply making disciples. He once told his followers:

> Brethren, the purpose of performing the *bai‘at* is that you should give up everything you do which is of the nature of polytheism and heresy, making *tāziyah*s, setting up banners, worshipping the graves of *pīr*s and martyrs, making offerings to them and taking vows in their name. All this you should **(p.177)** give up, and do not believe that your good and ill comes from anyone except God; do not recognise anyone but Him as having the power to grant the fulfilment of your wishes. If you continue [in the way of polytheism and heresy] merely offering *bai‘at* will bring no benefit.[55]

Sermons (*wā‘z*) were delivered in most of the towns, criticizing *bid‘at* and emphasizing scrupulous adherence to the Qur’ān and Hadīs. The main intention was *islāh-i ‘aqā’id-o-a‘māl* (reform of creedal tenets and practices). Another

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purpose that these tours served was to inform Saiyid Ahmad of how much support he would be able to muster in his planned campaign. Although actual preparations for jihad in terms of collection of funds and military training for select disciples began after his return from the Hijaz in 1823, there can be little doubt that the intention was present even before he went on hajj. During his tours, Saiyid Ahmad is said to have given *baiʻat-i-jihādī* to several people and while visiting Lucknow and Kanpur in 1820, he is reported to have promised disciples eager to join him on jihad that he would take them when he set out for that purpose.[56] The tour thus aimed at building an organizational base for the movement, using the available network of Sūfī orders, and reinforcing Saiyid Ahmad’s position as a leader of the Mujāhidīn by putting him on the socially sanctified pedestal of a *pīr*.

The impact of Saiyid Ahmad on the religious life of the *qasbah*s and on Muslim intellectuals and common people was immense. It is affirmed in the accounts of British officials at the time. A British resident at Delhi reported to the Governor General about the feelings of Muslims towards jihad on the frontiers in the following words:

> Syed Ahmed, Maulvi Ismāʻīl and their colleagues have established a very extensive, if not universal influence over the minds of our Mahomedan subjects. During the period of their recent attacks on Ranjit Singh’s territories, the most fervent anxiety for their success pervaded the Mahomedan population at Delhi. A number quit their houses and marched to join them, including some who resigned their employment in the Company’s service, both the military and civil branches, for that purpose. It is said that the King of Delhi encouraged this spirit.[57]

(p.178) A British correspondent from Ghazipur wrote:

> Zeal of religion characterizes our present Mahomedan subjects, especially of those in the Central Provinces. The great Syed Ahmud Peerzada, a resident of Rae-Bareilly, who returned from Mecca a few years ago, was an able champion in the Mahomedan cause. On his way up to the territories of His Majesty the King of Oude, where and in some other quarter he was suspected as a disaffected person, he infused such a spirit of religion and inquiry amongst his followers of whom numerous of all ranks are to be met with in all parts of Hindoostan, that they will not easily subside.[58]

A contemporary observer wrote that Saiyid Ahmad’s sermons, delivered in simple language, had such a tremendous impact on the masses that there was a sudden ‘spurt of religious activity’, ‘mosques were again full with Muslims’, and ‘wine shops suffered a loss of trade’.[59] At places such as Nanauta, a centre of Muslim scholarship, the popularity of Saiyid Ahmad was such that so many people flocked to take *baiʻat* that he had to unwind his turban and initiate people

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by holding one end in his hand, while those to be initiated touched some part of the rest of it.[60]

Most of the *qasbah*s and towns visited by Saiyid Ahmad during his tours of north India had traditionally been centres of Muslim education, learning, and culture. Since the death of Shāh Walīullāh, *‘ulamā* trained in his traditions settled in these *qasbah*s (like Kandhla, Nanauta, and Gangoh, among others) and the region witnessed a spurt in revival of Hadīs studies. Many *qasbah*s were inhabited by *ashrāf* families with a long tradition of intellectual and family linkages with Walīullāhī scholars at Delhi, which, as noted below, also affected Chishtī-Sābrī networks. The whole of the Bareilly–Rampur belt was the Rohilla heartland where Naqshbandī tradition had been particularly strong from the time of Mirzā Mazhar Jān-i-Jānān. Thus, the region readily accepted the mission of Saiyid Ahmad and his popularity was enhanced through his Walīullāhī connections.

A significant contribution of Saiyid Ahmad was to diffuse the Walīullāhī tradition of the eighteenth century to different parts of north **(p.179)** India. According to Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī, a biographer of Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī, it was Saiyid Ahmad’s visit to Nanauta which proved a turning point in the town’s history. People were so impressed by him that they willingly sent their children to Delhi for studies and his visit created an interest in religious education. Although *qasbah*s had been home to Muslim intelligentsia for a long time, there was a further increase in students who visited Delhi to join the study circles that taught Walīullāhī ideas.[61] This not only created extensive Muslim networks between Delhi and the surrounding *qasbah*s, but also produced a group of Muslim intellectuals inspired by Saiyid Ahmad and sharing his aspiration to rejuvenate the Muslim community. The creation of such a *jamā‘at* was an important outcome of these tours. The networks formed by them contributed to the linking of *‘ulamā* and Sūfī roles in the *qasbah*s and to the spread of revivalist trends.

Connections of the Chishtī-Sābrīs with the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia

A major point of difference between the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia and the puritanical Wahhābīs in Arabia was that unlike the latter, the former fully accepted Sufism as a branch of higher Islamic knowledge worthy to be followed by those with a firm grounding in Islamic Law. Saiyid Ahmad followed the tradition of Shāh Walīullāh and wished to reform, not expunge, Sufism in India. His initial training at Delhi was more in mystical sciences than in *‘ulūm-i-zāhirī*.[62] He combined the teachings of the Chishtī, Naqshbandī, and Qādirī orders into his own Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia, which was an exoteric discipline in evident conformity with the religious law. In the words of Aziz Ahmad, Saiyid Ahmad ‘harnessed whatever was left of the inward Sūfī experience in the decadent early nineteenth century Muslim India to the dynamism of a reformist orthodox revival.’[63] *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm* claims the perfection of Saiyid Ahmad as a

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Sūfī *shaikh* who combined in him both *tarīqah-i-nubuwwat* (the way of the Prophet) **(p.180)** and *tarīqah-i-wilāyat* (the way of Sūfīs).[64] The former he attained through a dream of the Prophet, ‘Alī, and Fātima. The latter he achieved through spiritual communication from the founders of the Naqshbandī and Qādirī orders and from a spiritual encounter with Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī, while meditating at his tomb in Delhi.[65]

Saiyid Ahmad utilized the opportunity that his tours provided to organize his followers into a homogenous network by recourse to initiation. Newly recruited followers who took *bai‘at* from him were initiated into the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia using traditional Sūfī rituals. He willingly initiated people into other orders, though insisting that the rituals and contemplative practices of Sufism were for those who fulfilled their basic creedal obligations. The concept of multiple initiations provides a striking example of the manner in which the Muhammadīs utilized Sūfī institutions to extend their own organizational networks. John Colvin, a British official, mentions that allegiance to the brotherhood was consciously reinforced by distributing among the disciples copies of their spiritual genealogy.[66] Until 1818, Saiyid Ahmad and his followers kept themselves occupied in Sūfī practices of *zikr-o-fikr*, although the impulse of jihad was also present. His growing interest in jihad gave Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia the outlook of a Sūfī-oriented activist movement for social and religious reform.

In the Mujāhidīn movement, we observe practical manifestations of the rapprochement of Sūfī and *‘ālim* traditions. While giving due importance to Sūfī sources of authority, they denounced the excessive other-worldliness of Sūfīs and promoted jihad as a form of personal piety. Many of the ‘ulamā in the nineteenth century were enrolled in one or the other Sūfī order, or at some point shared connections with several Sūfī orders. Also, the Mujāhidīn succeeded in creating a broad basis of unity among the Muslims against foreign rule. The iconoclastic nature of the movement appealed to religiously educated Muslims, whereas its emphasis on Islamic egalitarianism and its use of Sūfī networks ensured **(p. 181)** the support of the lower classes. Thus we find that people from all backgrounds joined the movement: Sūfīs like Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī and Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn Dihlawī; *‘ulamā* like Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh of Kandhla[67] and ‘Abdullāh Firangī Mahalī[68]; *zamindar*s like Saiyid Qutb ‘Alī of Basti[69]; ‘rich men’ like Ghulām ‘Alī Allahābādī[70] and Mīr Faiz ‘Alī Gorakhpurī[71]; public servants like Muhammad Muqīm and Qāzī Ahmadullāh[72]; scions of aristocratic families including the descendants of Tīpū Sultān;[73] and common soldiers, like those of the Lucknow army.[74]

It is reported that while touring north India, Saiyid Ahmad also visited some of the Sūfī *khānqāh*s in Awadh. On his way to Allahabad, he went to the shrine of Shāh Ashraf Sālon (d. 1754) and met the *sajjāda nashīn* Shāh Karīm ‘Atā. It is believed that the ‘*urs* ceremony was going on and both Saiyid Ahmad and Shāh

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Ismā‘īl debated with Shāh Karīm ‘Atā the validity, according to Islamic texts, of holding such ceremonies.[75] During his stay at Dinapur, Saiyid Ahmad visited the famous *khānqāh* of Phulwari Sharif and met its *sajjāda nashīn* Shāh Ni‘matullāh. His son and successor Shāh Abul Hasan Fard arranged a sumptuous dinner in honour of Saiyid Ahmad, Shāh Ismā‘īl, and Maulānā ‘Abdul Hayy. The next day, a religious discussion took place and Saiyid Ahmad was impressed by the learning of the *‘ulamā* of Phulwari Sharif and found the *khānqāh* free of some of the prevailing innovations.[76] The *khānqāh* papers of the shrine of Mullā Shāhbāz in Bhagalpur also record a visit of Shāh Ismā‘īl to arrange a meeting in the *khānqāh*.[77]

There is evidence that many Sūfīs joined in the jihad of Saiyid Ahmad. In the list of people present with Saiyid Ahmad on the frontiers in 1827, we find names like Nizām-ud-din Auliyā’ and Miānjī Nizām-ud-dīn **(p.182)** Chishtī, who must have been Sūfīs.[78] After the battle at Balakot, Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn (the grandson of Shāh Rafī‘-ud-dīn Dihlawī, and student and son-in-law of Shāh Muhammad Ishāq) left Delhi to join the Muhammadī camp at Sittana. He tried to reinvigorate the Mujāhidīn movement then recuperating after the Balakot defeat. He participated in the battle at Rojhan, fought against the Sikhs in 1837, after which he migrated to Baluchistan. At Ghazni, in 1839, he fought an unsuccessful battle against British forces. Thereafter he moved to Sittana, where he died in 1840.[79] When Hājī Imdādullāh came to Delhi in 1833, Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn became his first *murshid* in the Naqshbandī order. Imdādullāh studied with him at the *madrasah* of Shāh Muhammad Ishāq, located in Bāzār sui-wālān, and received *ijāzat* from him in the Naqshbandī order.[80] Although Imdādullāh could not spend much time with him because of his father’s illness and because Shaikh Nasīr-ud-dīn himself left for jihad at the frontier, he seems nevertheless to have imbibed the passion of jihad from him, for he once expressed a desire to join him in jihad.[81]

Among the Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s it was Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Fātimī who was most actively involved with Saiyid Ahmad and his movement. While Saiyid Ahmad was visiting Saharanpur as part of his missionary tours, he met Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm and enrolled him in Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia. According to the account of their meeting, both spent some time discussing the subtleties of mysticism.[82] Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm also summoned Miānjī Nūr Muhammad from Lohari and got him enrolled in Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia.[83] That Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm impressed Saiyid Ahmad is proven by an instance when a *pīrzāda* who had joined Saiyid Ahmad at Calcutta was sent to him for training.[84] The association with Saiyid **(p.183)** Ahmad had a considerable impact on him and he urged his disciples to follow Saiyid Ahmad as well. He once said:

> When I had not joined Saiyid Ahmad and I was on the ways of my *shaikh*s, I used to perform spiritual exercises, sat in isolation in *chillā*s, ate bread made from barley, wore woollen garments and had several *murīd*s and

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> whoever came to me to become a *durvesh* I used to provide him the required training. I kept no worldly desires. My *nisbat* [company] had great capacity to influence people in a short time and induce ecstasy in them […]. In spite of all these qualities, when I got the chance of meeting Saiyid sahib [Saiyid Ahmad] at Saharanpur and did *bai‘at* on his hands and learnt his *tarīqah*, I realised that if I had died in my earlier condition, my life would have been purposeless. I then told my *murīd*s that if you need to excel in this life and the other then you should also join Saiyid Ahmad, otherwise I am not responsible for you on the Day of Judgement. Afterwards I gave up the life of ease and took up laborious works and did all kinds of jobs. The blessings I received earlier in spiritual retreats were not even a tenth of those that I receive from God while doing these laborious tasks. If it had not been so, why would I have left the comfortable life for a life of struggle? My advice is that you should devote yourselves to *hazrat* [Saiyid Ahmad] and he would decree what he feels is best for you. Follow his advice and consider your benefit in it and do not let your own opinions interfere.[85]

It is also reported that after joining Saiyid Ahmad, Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm went to Sadhaura, where he called the *khuddām* (workers at a shrine) and insisted on discontinuing the customary annual ‘*urs* of Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī. He told them:

> Though the ‘*urs* of my *pīr sāhib* [Shāh ‘Abdul Bārī] has been held for the last several years and it was I who popularised it and made it as successful as it is today, now God has guided me and I have realised its drawbacks. So I request you people to terminate it for the benefit of all.[86]

Hājī Imdādullāh’s account of his own spiritual genealogy also attests the importance of Saiyid Ahmad. He mentioned his *bai‘at-i-bātinī* (spiritual initiation) in the Naqshbandī order in the following words:

> Externally, my initiation in Tarīqah-i-Naqshbandia is from Maulānā Nasīr-ud-dīn Dihlawī, *khalīfah* of Muhammad Āfāq. But internally, it is without any **(p.184)** intermediary from the Prophet in the following way. I saw him standing on a high pedestal and shining with light and Saiyid Ahmad held his blessed hand and I, out of respect, stood afar. Hazrat Saiyid Ahmad then took hold of my hand and placed it in the Prophet’s hand.[87]

Hājī Imdādullāh also remembered his *bai‘at-i-tabarruk* (honorary initiation) at the hands of Saiyid Ahmad when he was only three years of age.[88] Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī wrote that his *murshid* Hājī Imdādullāh was like a ‘Saiyid Ahmad of his times’.[89] From these instances it is evident that association with Saiyid Ahmad was indeed important for the Chishtī-Sābrīs during the nineteenth century.

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By drawing Sūfī orders into its reform programme on the one hand, and by strengthening its contacts with the Walīullāhī *‘ulamā* on the other, the Muhammadī movement brought the two groups of Sūfī and *‘ulamā* closer. It created an extensive and complex network of scholars and Sūfīs in Delhi and the surrounding *qasbah*s and contributed to the spread of Walīullāhī thought in the region. The great respect which Nūr Muhammad and Hājī Imdādullāh had for the *‘ulamā* may be seen as an outcome of this effect of Saiyid Ahmad’s movement. Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm, after his association with Saiyid Ahmad, used to say: ‘Through the blessings of Saiyid Sāhib, I learnt how to pray and how to fast’,[90] which apparently meant that while earlier he knew the importance of spiritual training, he learnt the importance of the external aspects of these religious obligations from Saiyid Ahmad and learnt to recognize their higher reality (*haqīqat*). Similarly, it was the respect for the *‘ulamā* and the position of *imām* which led Nūr Muhammad to refuse to listen to *samā‘*, saying:

> Sometimes people make me an *imām* and *‘ulamā* have differences regarding the permissibility of *samā‘* even if unaccompanied by musical instruments.[91]

Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī also notes the great esteem in which the *‘ulamā* were held by Hājī Imdādullāh:

> **(p.185)** Hājī Sāhib gave so much respect to the *‘ulamā*, even if they were his *khādim* [servant], that if any gift was brought to him from them, he would respect it by touching it to his head and considered it a *tabarruk* [blessing].[92]

This closeness and respect for the *‘ulamā-i-zāhir* can only be seen as the logical outcome of the trend of Sūfī–*‘ālim* intermingling which the Walīullāhī tradition had encouraged in eighteenth century-Delhi. The Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia, by drawing both *‘ulamā* and Sūfīs into its programme of reform and through its extensive tours of the *qasbah*s, facilitated the spread of this trend to other towns as well.

Walīullāhī *‘Ulamā* and the Chishtī-Sābrī Order

An important contribution of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia was that it reinforced the complex, intricate, scholarly networks that emerged among the Chishtī-Sābrīs and some of the leading *‘ulamā* of the nineteenth century. These networks had been created in some cases by family connections, but mostly through a teacher–student relationship formed in *sulūk* and expressed by the grant of *khilāfat* or *ijāzat*, or in case of formal religious education (*dīnī ta‘līm*), in grants of *sanad*s. It becomes evident that the Chishtī-Sābrīs were taught by some of the leading scholars of the nineteenth century who were closely connected to Walīullāhī traditions. To understand these networks it is convenient to highlight

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the role of three key figures, each associated with a different place, but all linked to Shāh Walīullāh:

a) *Shāh Muhammad Ishāq of Delhi (d. 1846):* The founders of Dārul ‘ulūm (Deoband) and also their spiritual mentors of the Chishtī-Sābrī order were linked to the family of Shāh Walīullāh through Shāh Muhammad Ishāq. He was the grandson of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and had succeeded him at his Delhi seminary in 1824. He was drawn into the Muhammadī movement and supported the jihad on the frontier. In 1841, he emigrated permanently to the Hijaz, which, later sources suggest, was to establish a connection between the Indian reform movement and the major Islamic centres abroad.[93] His students in India took up different activities; **(p. 186)** some established printing presses to spread Islamic scriptures and reform literature, some continued to teach in the traditional manner, some joined the progressive Delhi College, while others rebelled against the British in 1857. Although Hājī Imdādullāh did not study with Shāh Muhammad Ishāq in Delhi, he met him briefly in Mecca on his first hajj in 1845. As he recalled later on, Shāh Ishāq had helped him in four matters —to regard oneself as the lowest of all (*kam-tarīn*) so that the *nafs* is subdued, to look always for *halāl* (lawful) means of livelihood, instruction on a particular form of *murāqabah* (meditation), and permission to perform the spiritual exercises and rituals (*ma‘mūlāt*) of his spiritual family (*khāndān*).[94]

b) *Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh of Kandhla (d. 1829):* This key figure acted as a link between the Chishtī-Sābrīs and Walīullāhī *‘ulamā*. His students provided new dynamics in the socio-religious life of the *qasbah*s of the Upper Doab. Although Ilāhī Bakhsh was not directly connected to the Chishtī-Sābrīs, some of the leading *‘ulamā* and teachers of the nineteenth century had been trained by him. His importance for the Chishtī-Sābrī order can be judged from the fact that, of the six teachers of Hājī Imdādullāh mentioned in his *malfūzāt*, five had been students of Ilāhī Bakhsh. He belonged to Kandhla and completed his education at Delhi under Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, where he was a fellow-student of Shāh Rafī‘-ud-dīn **(p.187)** and Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir (sons of Shāh Walīullāh). In *sulūk* he had received investiture from Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and Saiyid Ahmad. Around 1815, he returned to Kandhla and took up a career as a teacher.[95]

c) *Maulānā Mamlūk ‘Alī of Nanauta (d. 1851):* One of the students of Ilāhī Bakhsh, Mamlūk ‘Alī was a renowned scholar in Delhi. He belonged to a respected Siddiqui family in Nanauta. There, he started his education and studied Arabic from Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh,[96] and then moved to Delhi around 1815. In Delhi, he studied a lesson in *Hidāyat-ul-nahv* from Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz before joining the study circles of ‘Abdullāh Khān ‘Alavī (d. 1848, **(p.188)** a student of Shāh Ismā‘īl)[97] and Saiyid Muhammad Qalandar Jalālābādī (d. 1844, a student of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh), renowned

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in Delhi for his Hadīs lessons.[98] His main teacher, however, was Maulānā Rashīd-ud-dīn Khān (d. 1827, a student of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, Shāh Rafī‘-ud-dīn, and Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir) who, according to Saiyid Ahmad Khān, had taught Mamlūk ‘Alī ‘with the same devotion as a father teaches his son’.[99]

After completing his education, Mamlūk ‘Alī became associated with the famous Delhi College which, though run by the British, functioned more as a *madrasah*.[100] Mamlūk ‘Alī’s association with the College proved an incentive for many others to join.[101] Many teachers at Delhi College were directly associated with Muhammad Ishāq and the family of Shāh Walīullāh. The students of Mamlūk ‘Alī not only benefited from his **(p.189)** presence in the College, but even his house in Delhi served as a *madrasah*. One of his students, Karīm-ud-dīn Pānipatī (d. 1879), writes:

> His house appeared like a web work of students, his *madrasah* was the hub of scholars and accomplished persons. Hundreds of students benefitting from his vast erudition have left as learned men for different parts of Hindustan and many have become popular in the region between Afghanistan and Hindustān.[102]

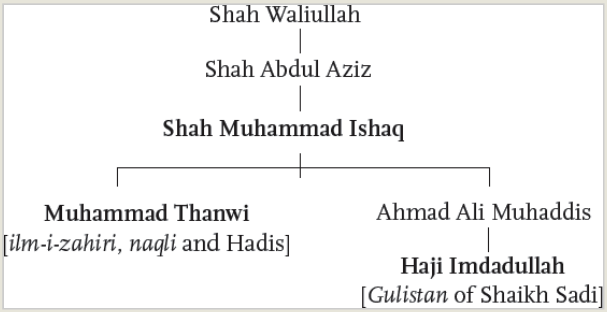


Chart 4.1 Chishtī-Sābrī Connections with Shāh Walīullāh through Shāh Muhammad Ishāq

Source: Based on Ashraf Ali Thanwi, *Shamaim-i-imdadiyah*

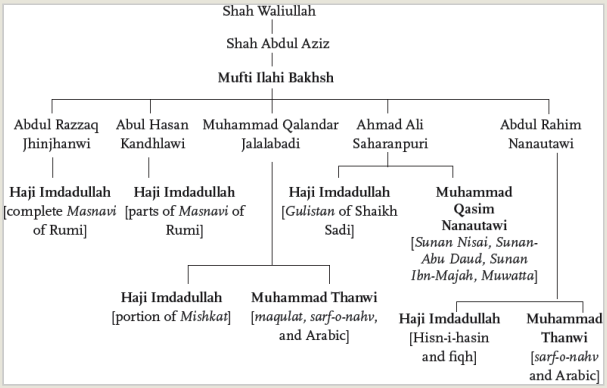

Shah Waliullah
Shah Abdul Aziz
Mufti Ilahi Bakhsh
Abdul Razzaq Jhinjhanwi
Abul Hasan Kandhlawi
Muhammad Qalandar Jalalabadi
Ahmad Ali Saharanpuri
Abdul Rahim Nanautawi
Haji Imdadullah [complete Masnavi of Rumi]
Haji Imdadullah [parts of Masnavi of Rumi]
Haji Imdadullah [Gulistan of Shaikh Sadi]
Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi [Sunan Nisai, Sunan-Abu Daud, Sunan Ibn-Majah, Muwatta]
Haji Imdadullah [portion of Mishkat]
Muhammad Thanwi [maqulat, sarf-o-nahv, and Arabic]
Haji Imdadullah [Hisn-i-hasin and fiqh]
Muhammad Thanwi [sarf-o-nahv and Arabic]

Chart 4.2 Chishtī-Sābrī Connections with Shāh Walīullāh through Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh

Source: Based on Nurul Hasan Rashid, *Ustaz-ul-kul Maulana Mamluk-ul-Ali Nanautawi*.

Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī (d. 1905), a principal *khalīfah* of Hājī Imdādullāh, who had studied in Delhi under Mamlūk ‘Alī, wrote about his teachers:

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> In those times some of the best teachers were available in Delhi, but among those who had full command of the deeper meanings and who could lecture on different topics in a way that students remembered it for a long time, were Maulānā Mamlūk ‘Alī Sāhib and Muftī Sadr-ud-dīn Sāhib.[103]

(p.190) Hājī Imdādullāh’s contacts with Mamlūk ‘Alī began early in his life. Mamlūk ‘Alī accompanied Imdādullāh when he went to Delhi for his education and placed him under Ahmad ‘Alī Muhaddis Sahāranpurī (d. 1880), who taught him *Gulistān* of Shaikh Sādī. Since Mamlūk ‘Alī’s native town Nanauta was also the maternal home of Imdādullāh, they were always on close terms. Mamlūk ‘Alī had made it a point to visit Thanabhawan whenever he travelled between Nanauta and Delhi and whenever Imdādullāh visited him, he would make time for him whatever his schedule.[104] The closeness between the two was continued by Mamlūk ‘Alī’s son Maulānā Ya‘qūb Nānautawī (d. 1884), a *khalīfah* of Imdādullāh. Later Ya‘qūb became the first *sadr* (head teacher) of Dārul ‘ulūm (Deoband). In regard to this appointment, Imdādullāh wrote to Hājī ‘Ābid Husain (d. 1912), the *muhtamim* (administrative head) of the *madrasah*:

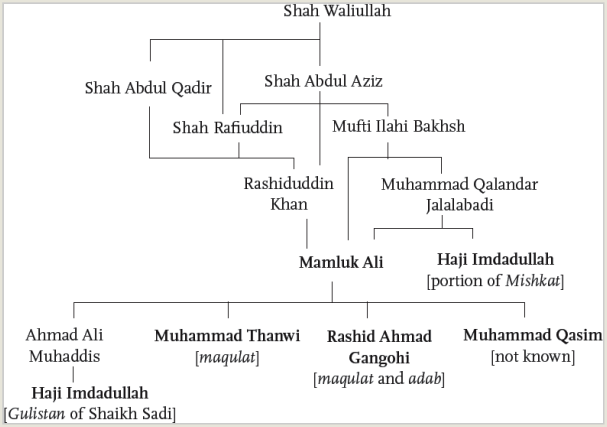


Chart 4.3 Chishtī-Sābrī Connections with Shāh Walīullāh through Mamlūk ‘Alī

Source: Based on Nurul Hasan Rashid, *Ustaz-ul-kul Maulana Mamluk-ul-Ali Nanautawi*.

> You should regard providing for the comforts and satisfaction of Maulvī Muhammad Ya‘qūb as your duty. For, evidently, the existence of the *madrasah* depends on the presence of such eminent men.[105]

A few letters written from Mecca by Imdādullāh are addressed to Maulānā Ya‘qūb, who was apparently influenced by his mystic philosophy.[106] He is credited with translating *Ziā’-ul-qulūb*, an important work on mysticism by Imdādullāh, into Arabic for the benefit of his Arabic-speaking followers. It was completed in 1878, much to the pleasure of Imdādullāh. When another of Imdādullāh’s *khalīfah*s, Shāh Muhammad Husain, returned to India after the hajj, he brought with him a copy to have it printed.[107] It was printed in 1898, during the lifetime of Imdādullāh, who was delighted to see the printed copy.[108] Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī mentions that besides the Arabic translation, Maulānā Ya‘qūb

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also wrote a *hāshiya* (explanatory notes) to the work, but this is no longer extant.[109]

(p.191) Mamlūk ‘Alī’s presence in Delhi opened the gates of learning to many students of Nanauta. It was through him that many scholars got the chance to be trained in the Walīullāhī tradition. Besides Maulānā Ya‘qūb, other important names from Nanauta included Muhammad Mazhar Nānautawī (d. 1885),[110] Muhammad Qāsim Nānautawī, and Maulānā Ahsan Nānautawī[111] (d. 1895; nephew of Mamlūk ‘Alī).

The teachers of Imdādullāh played a significant role in building the links between the Chishtī-Sābrī order and the Walīullāhī family. Most of them were connected to the family of Shāh Walīullāh through Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh.[112] The *malfūzāt* of Imdādullāh mention his six teachers in ‘*ulūm-i-zāhirī*. Some details about four of them is known:

a) *Saiyid Muhammad Qalandar Jalālābādī (d. 1844):* He belonged to a sādāt family of Najibabad and studied the entire *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī with Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh. His Hadīs lectures were renowned in Delhi and he was also respected for his accomplishments in *ma‘rifat*, *taqwā*, and *sulūk*. Mamlūk ‘Alī, also studied Hadīs and *ma‘qūlāt* with him.[113]
b) *‘Abdul Razzāq Jhinjhānwī:* A grandson of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, he studied all the books on *darsiyāt* and *tibb* with him. He also read the *Masnavī* of Rūmī with him and Abul Hasan Kāndhlawī. He is said to have memorized the entire *Masnavī* and taught it for almost sixty years. Hājī Imdādullāh worked through the *Masnavī* with him three times.[114]
c) *Abul Hasan Kāndhlawī (d. 1853):* The son of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, with whom he studied *tibb*, the *Masnavī* of Rūmī, and *Sahīh* **(p.192)** *Bukhārī*. After completing his education, he began teaching students in Kandhla. He was closely associated with Saiyid Ahmad and wrote *Risāla-i-jihādia* in support of jihad. He completed the Urdu translation, begun by Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, of the first volume of the *Masnavī* in 1836, and had it printed from Calcutta in 1845. He was an accomplished poet in his own right and wrote three *masnavīs* and two *dīwān*s on themes dealing with *tasawwuf* and ‘*ishq-i-ilāhī*.[115]
d) *Ahmad ‘Alī Muhaddis Sahāranpurī (d. 1880):* After studying under Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh at Kandhla, he moved to Delhi to continue his education under Mamlūk ‘Alī and Wajīh-ud-dīn Sahāranpurī.[116] While on hajj in 1843, he studied *Sahīh Sitta* with Muhammad Ishāq and received a *sanad* from him. He was also associated with seminaries like Dārul ‘ulūm in Deoband and Mazāhirul ‘ulūm in Saharanpur. Ahmad ‘Alī’s greatest contribution was to editing and printing Hadīs literature.[117] For that purpose, he set up the Matba‘-i-Ahmadī in Delhi, which continued till 1857. He edited and wrote *hāshiya* (marginal notes) on *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Jāmi‘ Tirmizī*, and *Mishkāt-ul-masābih*. *Sharh Muslim* and *Sharh Nawawī*

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were edited and printed together in one volume. He also edited and collated different copies of *Sunan Abū Dāūd*. *Sahīh Bukhārī* had been printed earlier at Matba‘ Saiyidul Akhbār in 1848, but after ten years of painstaking editing, it was reprinted by his Matba‘-i-Ahmadī in two volumes in 1851 and 1854 respectively. He continued to work on further editing of *Sahīh Bukhārī* and reprinted it with notes in 1867.[118] Matba‘-i-Ahmadī also printed **(p.193)** his editions of *Sahīh Muslim* and *Jāmi‘ Tirmizī*, in 1866.[119] The *hāshiya* that Ahmad ‘Alī composed on *Mishkāt* was printed a second time by Matba‘-i-Ahmadī in 1855.[120]

These *‘ulamā* with whom the Chishtī-Sābrī leaders were closely associated furthered the Muhammadī programme of printing Hadīs and other religious texts. In this connection, one more name deserves mention, that of Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī (d. 1895). He was a close family associate of Hājī Imdādullāh and a nephew of Mamlūk ‘Alī. His education, begun at home where he memorized the Qur’ān, was completed in Delhi.[121] Later he became associated with Benaras College and Bareilly College and founded a *madrasah* called Misbāhul tahzīb in Bareilly (later changed to Misbāhul ‘ulūm). In 1877, he moved to Nanauta and established a school called Ahsanul madāris, which continued to function until 1937.[122] Maulānā Ahsan established the Matba‘-i-Siddīquī in Bareilly, which printed a number of works of Shāh Walīullāh on philosophy and mysticism, such as *Hujjatullāh-al-bāligha*, *Izālat-ul-khafā’*, and others.[123] It also printed important works on Sufism, like *Anwār-ul-‘ārifīn* and *Irshād-i-Muhammadī*.[124] Muhammad Ahsan also set up a book store which sold the books printed at Nawal Kishore (Lucknow), Ahmadī Press (Delhi), Nizāmī Press (Kanpur), and Husainī Press (Bombay). A number of famous scholars, including Ahmad ‘Alī Muhaddis, Ya‘qūb Nānautawī, Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, and Muhammad Mazhar Nānautawī, used to purchase books from him.[125] He also translated a number of books by Shāh Walīullāh into Urdu, including *al-Insāf fī’l bayān sabab-al-ikhtilāf* (as *Kashaf*), *Risāla* ***(p.194)*** *‘Iqd-ul-jidd* (as *Salk-i-marwārīd*) and edited the *Fatāwa* of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz and *Qurrat-ul-‘aynayn* of Shāh Walīullāh.[126]

By the mid-nineteenth century the Chishtī-Sābrī leadership had, in sum, merged with the *‘ulamā*. The *qasbah*s now engaged in ever growing intellectual exchange with the surrounding regions. The Muhammadī movement, with its sweeping programme of reform drawn from Walīullāhī traditions, played a major role in all these developments. Contact with such eminent heirs of the Walīullāhī School as Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz, Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, Mamlūk ‘Alī, and Muhammad Ishāq influenced the Chishtī-Sābrī order in different ways. It changed the *pīr–murīd* relationship and redefined the functions that a *shaikh* was expected to serve in his community. Their leading disciples were no longer drawn from the common or illiterate masses but invariably from the *‘ulamā* and men of learning. A *shaikh* was not sought for his *karāmāt* but as teacher, guide, and mentor—one who would develop a correct *‘aqīda* (faith) in his disciples and through his

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lifestyle exemplify the model of holiness for Muslims. The transformation from a *shaikh* who mediates between disciple and God, to one who guides the disciple to God through preaching and developing correct religious morals, is very clear in the nineteenth century leadership of the Chishtī order. Hājī Imdādullāh, who emerged as the chief Sūfī master of the order, continued the core Chishtī practices on the pattern of his spiritual ancestors, but also gave to them new meanings and purposes and successfully attracted *ʻulamā* to his order.

The Chishtī-Sābrīs in the *qasbah*s of Nanauta, Thanabhawan, and Jhinjhana achieved an elegant synthesis of the thoughts of famous Sūfī *shaikh*s and scholars from different places, such as ʻAbdul Haq of Rudauli, ʻAbdul Quddūs of Gangoh, Shāh Muhibbullāh of Allahabad, Shāh Walīullāh of Delhi, and Saiyid Ahmad of Rae-Bareilly. Their masters emphasized *ʻilm* (external knowledge) while also holding to *ʻirfān* (mystical insight); they had a passionate longing for the mystical heights but at the same time stressed sobriety (*sahv*); they espoused the benefits of solitude and poverty, but if required were willing to support struggle in the world through jihad; they promoted strict adherence to the Sunnat and Sharīʻat while sustaining within themselves elements of ecstasy and spiritual yearning (*wajd-o-shauq*). As noted by K. A. Nizami, in the various **(p.195)** movements for renewal and revival among Muslims, there exists a balance between three driving forces: *ʻishq* (longing or love for God), *ʻilm* (knowledge), and *ʻamal* (action).[127] The Chishtī-Sābrīs in the nineteenth century combined all three. They maintained spiritual connections with their Sūfī ancestors, whose traditions they respected and adhered to; they were influenced by the movement of military struggle against British rule, launched by Saiyid Ahmad; and many of their intellectual ideas were drawn from the Walīullāhī tradition. Thus, the *ʻishq* of Sūfīs, the *ʻilm* of the *ʻulamā*, and the *ʻamal* of the *mujāhidīn* were combined in their leadership. They produced individuals such as Hājī Imdādullāh, devoted to *ʻishq-i-ilāhī*; Qāsim Nānautawī and Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, devoted to religious learning; and the likes of Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm Fātimī and Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd, who died on the battlefield.

Notes:

([1]) Shāh Raham ʻAlī was a grandson of Shāh Qamīs Sādhaurwī of the Qamīsī order.

([2]) Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm had arrived in Amroha together with Akhwand Jān Muhammad Khān, his close companion and, like him, from Afghanistan. Their meeting with Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī has been recorded in the biography of his son Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAlīm (d. 1849), titled *Durr-i-Farīdī*, written by Maulānā Farīd Ahmad Ghāzīpurī. Shāh ʻAbdul Bārī gave *baiʻat* to Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm and sent Akhwand Jān to Shāh Ghulām ʻAlī Dihlawī to be initiated in the Naqshbandī order: Nasīm Ahmad ʻAlavī, *Sawānih qutb-i-ʻālam Miānjī Nūr Muhammad sāhib* (Jhinjhana, 2004), p. 50, n. 1.

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([3]) He is also mentioned at times as Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm ‘Pakhli wale’: Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī, ‘Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Wilāyatī Shahīd’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī ke rūhānī rishtey*, (ed.) Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī (Lahore, 2003), pp. 71–3. It is often believed that he was killed at Balakot, but according to Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, he died in the battle of Mayar. See his *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* (Mumbai, 2008), vol. 2, p. 330. For general details about him, see Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (Delhi, 1979), pp. 14–16; Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, (ed.) Zuhur-ul Hasan Kasoli (Deoband, n.d.), pp. 188–90.

([4]) ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, pp. 44–8. *Arwāh-i-salāsah* has wrongly attributed some events relating to Saiyid Ahmad’s training at Delhi to Miānjī Nūr Muhammad. We do not have any information that Mianji studied with Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz or any of his brothers.

([5]) Nasrullāh Khān Khweshgī, *Bayāz-i-dilkushā*, p. 152. Shāh Ihsān ‘Alī, from the family of Bābā Farīd, had come to Delhi in search of a job but was drawn to mysticism, eventually becoming a *khalīfah* of Shāh Abādānī. After finishing his spiritual training under him, Ihsān ‘Alī travelled to Najibabad, Amroha, and Tonk, where he met Saiyid Ahmad. After that he went to Jalalabad and, on the advice of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, moved to Saharanpur. He died at Ambala in 1818. For details see Nūrul Hasan Rāshid, ‘Hazrat Miānjī Nūr Muhammad Jhinjhānwī, sab se pehle pīr-o-murshid (Shāh Ihsān ‘Alī) se istifāda ke ba‘z tafsīlāt aur tīn ghair mut‘ārif maktūbāt’, *Ahwāl-o-āsār* 1, no. 3 (1995), pp. 47–53.

([6]) Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī, ‘Hazrat Miānjī Nūr Muhammad Jhinjhānwī’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh*, p. 90; ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, pp. 54–5.

([7]) Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī was born in 1814 in Thanabhawan, to a wealthy Faruqi family. After the capture of Thanabhawan by the British in 1857, he left for Rampur, where he stayed till 1861. In this period, he wrote his *Sharh Hisb-ul-bahr* and completed volume seven of *Masnavī Ma‘nvī* of Maulānā Rūmī. In 1861, at the invitation of Nawāb Wazīr-ud-daulā of Tonk, he moved to Tonk and was appointed tutor to the Nawab’s heir, Muhammad ‘Alī. In 1866 he returned to his hometown, but his property had been auctioned off after the Uprising and his final years were spent in law-suits. He died there in 1878.

([8]) Not much detail is available about Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd, who spent a considerable time in the service of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad and received *khilāfat* from him. He lived mostly at Thanabhawan and was involved in the events at Shamli and Thanabhawan during the 1857 Uprising, during which he died fighting: Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah* (Multan, AH 1405), pp. 81–2.

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([9]) He recalled the incident in his work *Irshād-i-muhammadī* (Meerut, AH 1308); Sanaul Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, in *Sawānih ‘ulamā-i-deoband*, (ed.) Nawāz Deobandī, vol. 1 (Deoband, 2000), p. 263.

([10]) ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, pp. 122, 126; Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, pp. 263, 272–3. Muhammad Thānwī, having studied under Mamlūk ‘Alī and Fazl-i-Haq Khairābādī, was an accomplished scholar. His erudition was affirmed by Shāh Muhammad Ya‘qūb, who once proclaimed: ‘There is abundance and breadth in your *nisbat*. You are not in need or want of any more striving’: Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, p. 297.

([11]) He once became so annoyed with his *murīd* for missing *tahajjud* prayers (a voluntary night prayer) that he sent him away. ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, pp. 131–2; Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, vol. 1, pp. 288–9.

([12]) Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, vol. 1, p. 266.

([13]) Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, vol. 1, pp. 266–8. When Hājī Imdādullāh and Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd asked him to join Miānjī Nūr Muhammad, he refused, saying ‘He is Mullā of a *masjid*, why should I give *bai‘at* to him’: ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, p. 125.

([14]) His *kamāl* and ‘*ilm-i-bātinī* were considered main reasons for the attraction of ‘*ulamā*: Ashraf ‘Ali Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 12.

([15]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 11.

([16]) Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 13.

([17]) Hājī Imdādullāh, ‘Ziā’-ul-qulūb’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Waqar Ali bin Mukhtar Ali (Deoband, n.d.), pp. 94–8.

([18]) Imdādullāh, ‘Faisla haft mas’la’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 99–115.

([19]) ‘Alavī, *Sawānih Miānjī Nūr Muhammad*, p. 127.

([20]) Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisār Ahmad Fāruqi, (Delhi, 1981), pp. 199.

([21]) Imdād Sābrī, ‘Hazrat Hāfiz Muhammad Zāmin Shahīd’, in *Sawānih ‘ulamā-i-deoband*, (ed.) Nawāz Deobandī, vol. 1, (Deoband, 2000), pp. 335–6.

([22]) Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia was also the name of the movement that Ahmad Idrīs (d. 1837) started in the Hijaz, and Khwāja Mīr Dard chose the same name for his Sufi order. Although there was no apparent connection between Ahmad Idrīs’ Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia and its Indian counterpart, the same name

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suggests the emphasis on the Prophet Muhammad as a guide for reform efforts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

([23]) F. A. Nizami, ‘Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints: Muslim Response to the British Presence in Delhi and the Upper Doab, 1803–1857’ (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1983), p. 262.

([24]) Whether the jihad was against the British or the Sikhs has been a matter of lively controversy. Early works by Hunter and Rehatsek emphasize its anti-British nature: W.W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans* (London, 1871); E. Rehatsek, ‘The History of the Wahhabys in Arabia and in India’, *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1880). This view has been contested by Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khān and Ja‘far Thānesarī: Saiyid Ahmad Khān, *Risālah asbāb-i-baghāwat-i-hind* (ed.) Mahmud Husain (Karachi, 1955); Ja‘far Thānesarī, *Sawānih Ahmadī* (Sadhaura, n.d.). According to Mirzā Hairat Dihlawī and Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, the jihad was equally against Sikhs and the British: Hairat Dihlawī, *Hayāt-i-tayyiba*; Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* (Mumbai, 2008); see Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 215. See also M.A. Bari, ‘A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines and Contemporary Reform Movements in Indian Islam’ (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1953), pp. 219–25.

([25]) Most modern writings in Urdu and English have concentrated on the jihad of Saiyid Ahmad. Scholars like ‘Ubaidullāh Sindhī, Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, Qeyamuddin Ahmad, Aziz Ahmad, Hafeez Malik, and ‘Abul Hasan ‘Alī Nadwī are unanimous that the movement was essentially political and the British its eventual targets.

([26]) See Harlan Pearson’s excellent study into the ideology and literature of the movement and also its use of new techniques and technologies, notably printing and popular preaching. For the important contribution of the Muhammadīs towards printing of Islamic texts and the role of their printed literature in their programme of reform, see Pearson’s *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-century India: The Tariqa-i-Muhammadiyah* (Delhi, 2008), ch. 4.

([27]) *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm* is a Persian work written in 1818 by Shāh Muhammad Ismā‘īl and Shāh ‘Abdul Hayy, the two main figures of the movement, and was printed in Calcutta in 1823. It is based on the teachings of Saiyid Ahmad and, unlike other Urdu tracts which sharply criticize Sufi practices, it is respectful of Sufi beliefs and precepts and full of Sufi technical phraseology. This book appears to have been addressed to the elites who were well versed in Persian and knew the subtleties of mysticism. Its chapters discuss different aspects of Sufism and peculiarities of spiritual experiences, religious innovations (*bid‘at*) which need to be shunned and differences between *rāh-i-wilāyat* and *rāh-i-nabuwwat* (the way of Sufis and the way of prophets), and it legitimizes and

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establishes the authority of Saiyid Ahmad as leader of the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia. The work suggests that the leaders saw themselves as spiritual elite who derived their legitimacy from esoteric Sufi tradition: Shāh Muhammad Ismā‘īl, *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm*, (Urdu transl.) (Deoband, n.d.).

([28]) *Taqwiyat-ul- īmān* was written in Arabic by Shāh Muhammad Ismā‘īl and translated by him into Urdu. Like other Urdu writings of the Muhammadīs, this book was written for the common people and deals primarily with the concepts of *shirk* and *bid‘at*. The book was printed in 1824: Shāh Muhammad Ismā‘īl, *Taqwiyat-ul- īmān*, (English transl.) Badar Azimabadi (Delhi, 2007).

([29]) *Shirk* was of four kinds: *Ishrāk fi’l ‘ilm* (associating partners in God’s Knowledge); *Ishrāk fi’l tasarruf* (associating partners in God’s Power); *Ishrak fi’l ‘ibādat* (associating partners in worship); and *Ishrāk fi’l ‘ādāt* (polytheism in customs and practices): Ismā‘īl, *Taqwiyat-ul- īmān*, pp. 23–31, 33–45, 47–58, 61–86. *Bid‘at* was classified into three kinds: those associated with ‘sceptics and heretics … appearing like genuine Sufis’ and relating to pilgrimages to shrines; those which relate to Shiism and ceremonies of Muharram; and those borrowed from other cultures, particularly Hinduism: John R. Colvin, ‘Notice of the Peculiar Tenets Held by the Followers of Syed Ahmed, Taken Chiefly from the “Sirat-ul-Mustaqim”, a Principal Treatise of That Sect, Written by Moulvi Mahommed Ismail’ *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 11 (1832), pp. 489–91.

([30]) Shāh Muhammad Ismā‘īl, *al-‘Abaqāt*, (Urdu transl.) Manāzir Ahsan Gilānī (Hyderabad, n.d.), as cited in Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in Indian Environment*, p. 213.

([31]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1 (Mumbai, 2008), pp. 287–8, 435.

([32]) This distinction has been well explained by M. A. Bari in ‘A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines’.

([33]) N. R. Farooqi questions the influence of Saiyid Ahmad’s tours of the western districts of modern Uttar Pradesh and Awadh in early nineteenth century. He points to the continuation of popular practices at the shrines of Awadh and at the *dargah* of Sālār Mas‘ūd Ghāzī in Bahraich, and concludes that these places remained practically untouched by the reform programme of Saiyid Ahmad and his impact on Muslims seems to have been momentary. N. R. Farooqi, ‘Saiyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli: An Account of His Life and Thought and An Appraisal of His Impact on the Sufi Centres of Awadh and Eastern India’, in *The Islamic Path: Sufism, Society and Politics in India*, (eds) Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri and Helmut Reifeld (Delhi, 2006), pp. 311–13.

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([34]) For instance, Maulvī Fazl Rasūl Badāyunī has tried to draw connection between *Taqwiyat-ul-īmān* and *Kitāb al-tauhīd* of ‘Abdul Wahhāb. See his *Saif-ul-jabbār* (Aligarh, AH 1287), p. 94. S. A. A. Rizvi compares *Radd al-ishrāk* of Shāh Ismā‘īl with *Kitāb al-tauhīd* of ‘Abdul Wahhāb. S. Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Shah Abd al Aziz: Puritanism, Sectarian Polemics and Jihad* (Canberra, 1982), p. 509.

([35]) Muhammad Hedayatullah, *Sayyid Ahmad: A Study of the Religious Reform Movement of Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli* (Lahore, 1970), p. 45.

([36]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 58.

([37]) Cited in Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī, ‘Mujaddid-i-Islām Hazrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī ke rūhānī rishtey*, p. 23.

([38]) Scholars such as Husain Ahmad Madanī, ‘Ubaidullāh Sindhī, Saiyid Muhammad Miān, Fazlur Rahman, I. H. Qureshi, and K. A. Nizami, among others, have suggested a key role of Shāh ‘Abdul ‘Azīz in the movement. For alternate views, see Rizvi, *Shah Abd al Aziz*, pp. 531–2.

([39]) Charles J. Adams, ‘The Naqshbandis of India and the Pakistan Movement’, in *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystic Order*, (eds) M. Gaborieau, A. Popovic, and T. Zarcone (Istanbul, 1990), pp. 226–7.

([40]) David Damrel, ‘The Spread of Naqshbandi Political Thought in the Islamic World’, in *Naqshbandis: Historical Development and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystic Order*, p. 280.

([41]) For such instances, see Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, pp. 144–5, 158–9.

([42]) Saiyid Ahmad, *Maktūbāt-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* (Lahore, 1969), letter no. 2.

([43]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, pp. 169, 187.

([44]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 3, pp. 143–6.

([45]) Cited in, S. A. A. Mawdudi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, (English transl.) Al-Ashari (Delhi, 1992), p. 74, n.18.

([46]) Bari, ‘A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines’, p. 255.

([47]) Bari, ‘A Comparative Study of the Early Wahhabi Doctrines, p. 210.

([48]) Marc Gaborieau, ‘Criticising the Sufis: The Debate in Early Nineteenth Century India’, in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of*

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Controversies and Polemics, (eds) F. De Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden, 1999), p. 458.

([49]) Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 63–4.

([50]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 187.

([51]) These included Ghaziuddin Nagar (modern Ghaziabad), Muradnagar, Meerut, Sardhana, Kandhla, Budhana, Phulat, Muzaffarnagar, Deoband, Gangoh, Nanauta, Thanabhawan, Rampur, Lohari, Saharanpur, Ambetha, and even small villages such as Shikarpur, Dantal, Toli, Paeli, Basoli, Shaikhpura, Chilkana, and others: Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, pp. 179–80.

([52]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 187.

([53]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, pp. 221–39.

([54]) This time he travelled to Dilmau, Dugdugi, Kima, Ojhani, Chapri, Allahabad, Banaras, Zamania, Ghazipur, Chhapra, Danapur, Phulwari Sharif, Azimabad, Mongher, Bhagalpur, Rajmahal, Murshidabad, and Hoogly, from where he left for Mecca in 1821. On his return from the hajj to Rae-Bareilly, he visited many of these places again and also Buxar and Mahmudabad: Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, pp. 259, 323. Besides his own extensive travels in the Doab region, he sent his disciples on similar planned tours. Maulānā Muhammad ‘Alī Rāmpurī was sent to Madras along with Wilāyat ‘Alī ‘Azīmābādī; in the east, his mission was spread by Karāmat ‘Alī and Sakhāwat ‘Alī, in Nepal by Maulānā Ja‘far ‘Alī, and in Afghanistan by Maulānā Habībullāh Qandhārī. Even in places such as Tibet, Java, Bulghar (Bulgaria), and Marrakesh, his disciples were present: Nafisul Husainī, ‘Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Wilāyatī Shahīd’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī ke rūhānī rishtey*, pp. 36–7.

([55]) S. Abul Hasan ‘Alī Nadwī, *Sīrat-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* (Lucknow, 1977), p. 185, cited in Pearson, *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-Century India*, p. 179.

([56]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 241.

([57]) Cited in Pearson, *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-Century India*, p. 178.

([58]) Cited in Pearson, *Islamic Reform and Revival in Nineteenth-Century India*, p. 180.

([59]) Cited in F. A. Nizami, ‘Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints’, p. 242.

([60]) Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī, *Sawānih Qāsmī* (Deoband, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 66.

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([61]) Gīlānī, *Sawānih Qāsmī*, vol. 1, pp. 71–4.

([62]) We are told that out of respect for his teacher, he would stay in the place indicated to him by Shāh ‘Abdul Qādir to do *zikr*, even in scorching heat or heavy rain. Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, pp. 158–9.

([63]) Aziz Ahmad, *Studies in Islamic Culture in Indian Environment*, p. 210.

([64]) Marc Gaborieau has explored the Sufi doctrines embodied in *Sirāt-ul-mustaqīm* in ‘Sufism in the first Indian Wahhabi Manifesto: The Siratul Mustaqim of Ismail Shahid and Abdul Hayy’, in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, (eds) Muzaffar Alam, F. Delvoye, and Marc Gaborieau (Delhi, 2000), pp. 149–64.

([65]) Colvin, ‘Notice of the Peculiar Tenets’, pp. 496–7.

([66]) Colvin, ‘Notice of the Peculiar Tenets’, p. 496.

([67]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 182.

([68]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 239.

([69]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 3, p. 193.

([70]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 263.

([71]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 254.

([72]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, pp. 219, 267.

([73]) M. Ja‘far Thānesarī, *Hayāt-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd* (Karachi, 1968), p. 56.

([74]) Thānesarī, *Hayāt-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 53.

([75]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 221.

([76]) Cited in Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *The Wahabi Movement in India* (Calcutta, 1966), pp. 33–4.

([77]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, p. 37.

([78]) Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 3, p. 384.

([79]) Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī, ‘Saiyid Maulānā Nasīr-ud-dīn Dihlawī’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī ke rūhānī rishtey*, pp. 82–7.

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([80]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 108; Imdād Sābrī, *Dehlī ke qadīm madāris wa mudarris* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 166–7; Bashīr-ud-dīn Ahmad, *Wāqi‘āt-i-dār-ul-hukumat dehlī*, vol. 2 (Agra, 1919), p. 167.

([81]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 109.

([82]) Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Deobandī, *Naqsh-i-hayāt*, as cited in Saiyid Nafīsul Husainī, ‘‘Shāh ‘Abdul Rahīm Wilāyatī Shahīd’, in *Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd se Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī ke rūhānī rishtey*, pp. 58–9.

([83]) Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī, *Anwār-i-muhammadī* (Meerut, AH 1291), p. 35.

([84]) Nadwī, *Sīrat-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, vol. 1, p. 301.

([85]) Nadwī, *Sīrat-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, pp. 197–8.

([86]) Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 187.

([87]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 108; Ashraf Ali Thānwī, *Karāmāt-i-imdādiyah* (Kanpur, AH 1321), p. 44.

([88]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 53.

([89]) Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Qisas-ul-akābir* (Lahore, n.d.), p. 72.

([90]) Thanwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, pp. 183, 185.

([91]) Thanwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 191.

([92]) Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Kamālāt-i-imdādiyah* (Shahkot, n.d.), p. 35.

([93]) I. H. Qureshi, *Ulama in Politics* (Delhi, 1985), pp. 216–20.

([94]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 13, 63.

([95]) For details, see Nūrul Hasan Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā Mamlūk-ul-‘Alī Nānautawī* (Kandhla, 2009), pp. 109–13.

([96]) The suggestion by Manāzir Ahsan Gīlānī that he studied only with Maulānā Rashīd-ud-dīn Khān is wrong. For references to his training under Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh, see Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 86–92.

([97]) Maulānā ‘Abdullāh Khān belonged to a Pathan family of Shamsabad. He was a known scholar of Persian *adab* and *insha* and an expert in *tibb*. Most of his life was spent in teaching at Delhi. For details, see Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 117–18.

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([98]) He was also the teacher of Hājī Imdādullāh. For details, see Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 113–16; Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisār Ahmad Fāruqi, ‘*zamima*’ by Nurul Hasan Rashid, pp. 332–36.

([99]) Saiyid Ahmad Khān, *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, (ed.) Khaliq Anjum (New Delhi, 1990), vol. 2, p. 115. Maulānā Rashīd-ud-dīn was learned not only in religious studies such as *fiqh*, Hadīs, *darsiyāt*, but also in *munāzarah*, *kalām*, and *ma‘qūlāt*. He wrote a *risāla* refuting certain views of Ram Mohan Roy. He was also the head of the Oriental Section of Delhi College for about two years. For details, see Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 118–30; Saiyid Ahmad Khān, *Āsār-us-sanādīd*, vol. 2, p. 115.

([100]) Its distinctive feature was that it combined traditional ‘religious’ subjects with Western subjects and sciences along with Arabic, Persian, or Sanskrit. Urdu was the medium of instruction but from 1828, certain subjects such as mathematics began to be taught on Western models and English was introduced. For information on Delhi College, see M. Pernau (ed.), *The Delhi College: Traditional Elites, the Colonial State and Education before 1857* (Delhi, 2006); and Maulvī ‘Abdul Haq, *Marhūm Dillī College* (Delhi, 1945).

([101]) In 1825, he was made *nā’ib mudarris-i-awwal* and in 1841 became the *mudarris-i-awwal*. Aloys Sprenger (d. 1893), the principal of Delhi College and Madrasah-i-Aliya (Calcutta), held him in high esteem and even invited him to join the Calcutta *madrasah*: Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, p. 138.

([102]) Karīm-ud-dīn Pānīpatī, *Farā’iz-ud-dahr* (Delhi, 1847), p. 402.

([103]) ‘Āshiq Ilāhī Meerathi, *Tazkirat-ul- rashīd*, vol. 1, (Deoband, 2002), pp. 30–1.

([104]) Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 319–20.

([105]) Ashraf Ali Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 115.

([106]) Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 12, 13, 18.

([107]) Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 13–14.

([108]) Thānwī, ‘Introduction’, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 50.

([109]) Ashraf ‘Alī Thānwī knew of a copy in the possession of Maulānā Hakīm Jamīl-ud-dīn: Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 343–4.

([110]) He also studied under Sadr-ud-dīn Āzurda, Shāh Muhammad Ishāq and Shāh ‘Abdul Ghanī Mujaddidī. He became the first *mudarris* of Mazāhirul ‘ulūm in Saharanpur in 1868: Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 422–9.

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([111]) His mother and aunt were also disciples of Imdādullāh. Ashraf ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, in *Sawānih ‘ulamā-i-deoband*, vol. 1, p. 513.

([112]) See Chart 4.2.

([113]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 11–14; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 10–12; Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 113–16.

([114]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 8; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi, ‘*zamima*’ by Nurul Hasan Rashid, pp. 337–41.

([115]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 100; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, ‘*zamima*’ by Nurul Hasan Rashid, p. 79.

([116]) Wajīh-ud-dīn (d. *ca*. 1844) was a student of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh. Initially he had opposed the views of Shāh Ismā‘īl, but later became a *murīd* of Saiyid Ahmad.

([117]) A great scholar of Hadis, he taught several Hadis works in the *madrasah* at Saharanpur, such as *Sahīh Muslim*, *Sunan Abū Dāūd*, *Sahīh Bukhārī*, *Mishkāt*, *Sharh Nasā’i*, *Sharh Ibn Mājah*, *Jāmi‘ Tirmizī*, *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik, *Jami‘ Saghīr*, *Tafsīr Jalālain*, *Tarjumah Qur’ān majīd*, *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm* of Ghazālī, *Durr-i-mukhtār*, *Shamā’il-i-Tirmizī*, *Muqaddima Tirmizī*, and *Sharh Mullah*: Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*, pp. 407–15.

([118]) Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*. Its second edition was printed earlier by Matba‘ ‘Abdul Ghafūr in Delhi in 1855.

([119]) Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*. It had been printed earlier by Matba‘-ul-‘ulūm in Delhi in 1849.

([120]) Rāshid, *Ustāz-ul-kul Hazrat Maulānā*. Its first edition is no longer available.

([121]) At Delhi all his teachers were connected to the Walīullāhī School. He used to say: ‘The family [of Shāh Walīullāh] from which so many scholars have benefitted, this *faqīr* is also indebted to the same family.’ Cited in ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, p. 519.

([122]) ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, pp. 528–34, 536.

([123]) ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, p. 535.

([124]) ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, p. 527.

([125]) ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, p. 528.

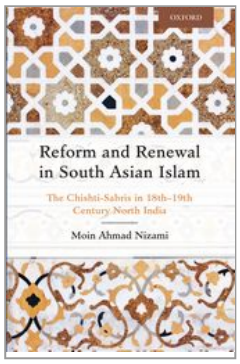
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([126]) ‘Usmānī, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahsan Nānautawī’, vol. 1, pp. 548–52.

([127]) K. A. Nizami, *Hazrat Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd aur unkī tehrīk-i-islāh-o-jihād* (Bareilly, 1991), p. 17.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Hājī Imdādullāh and the Continuation of Chishtī-Sābrī Traditions

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter 5 charts the intellectual dynamism of the Sabri mystic traditions and the breadth of their influence. It is devoted to a study of Haji Imdadullah, a key figure of the nineteenth century. Imdadullah was successful to a remarkable degree in establishing his authority within his immediate community of South Asian Muslim scholars and Sufi masters, who had come to form an interwoven community. In spite of his physical absence from the subcontinent following his migration to the Hijaz in 1860, he exerted a lasting influence on the north Indian *'ulamā* and held together a dispersed disciple community. He emerged as a spiritual forefather of many seminaries in Deoband, Saharanpur, and Lucknow; or movements such as *Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind* or *Tablighi Jamat*. Based on his writings and rich letter collections, the chapter shows how the Chishti-Sabris discussed questions of internal reform and identity, maintained connections with their pre-modern antecedents and tried to accommodate to the changing realities of early British India.

Keywords: Haji Imdadullah, Deoband, Mecca, 'ulamā, Chishti-Sabri, Ashraf Ali Thanwi

The eighty or so years of Hājī Imdādullāh's life passed in a century that saw rapid and profound changes in the socio-religious affairs of the Muslims in South Asia. The expansion of British colonial supremacy alongside the weakening of the structures of Mughal rule coincided with, if not prompted, the revivalist aspirations of the Walīullāhī *'ulamā*. Those aspirations were practically embodied in the Muhammadia movement of Saiyid Ahmad. Then, with the failure of the

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Uprising of 1857, the tottering Mughal Empire came to an end and power was transferred to the British Crown. That ended the hopes of the Muslim intelligentsia for a *khilāfat-i-zāhirī*[1] such as they had envisioned from the time of Shāh Walīullāh. In **(p.197)** response to the ensuing anxiety about how to sustain traditional learning and education, new Islamic seminaries and institutions of learning emerged, especially in the region of Doab. Besides the large institutions like Dārul ʻulūm, Mazāhirul ʻulūm, and the Nadwatul ʻulamā, numerous other *madrasah*s were set up in the *qasbah*s on a smaller scale. These *madrasah*s served as bastions of traditional learning and religious devotion in an age marked by the intensification of the influences of colonial modernity.

In this perspective, Hājī Imdādullāh holds a crucial place in the religious history of South Asian Muslims. He established his authority within his immediate community of Islamic scholars and Sūfī masters who were drawn together into an inter-woven community. In these turbulent times, these religious scholars and Sūfīs were struggling to re-assert the relevance of their socio-religious heritage. Hājī Imdādullāh was remarkably successful in that he was accepted as a respected leader among both Sūfīs and *ʻulamā*. This leadership was characterized by a continuation of Chishtī traditions with a competence to respond effectively to the disruption of a devotional medieval culture, the emergence of revivalist movements, the collapse of patronage networks, and the difficulties that these entailed for the Muslim community as a whole. While practising core Chishtī devotional rituals, Hājī Imdādullāh engaged with the accelerating changes that surrounded him and his community throughout the nineteenth century. Particularly significant in this transformed Chishtī-Sābrī order was the increasing enrolment of *ʻulamā* to its ranks, its concern to maintain accord and stability among Muslims, its commitment to providing traditional religious education and establishing religious seminaries, its readiness to mould devotional practices to accommodate the changed realities, and its creation of extensive networks of a dispersed *murīd* community.

Hājī Imdādullāh and the North Indian *ʻUlamā*

As noted earlier, the process of Sūfī–*ʻālim* integration was accelerated by the Muhammadī movement, which widened substantially the already existing linkages among scholars in the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab. Ever closer links between the Chishtī-Sābrīs and Walīullāhī scholars were formed during the first half of the nineteenth century. Hājī Imdādullāh had enduring contacts with some of the leading *ʻulamā* of Delhi, both as a result of family connections (as with Maulānā Mamlūk ʻAlī or Maulānā Ahsan Nānautawī) and through his teachers who were impressed by the **(p.198)** Walīullāhī thought. These long-standing contacts not only strengthened his authority among the *ʻulamā* and Muslim masses, they also involved the Chishtī-Sābrīs in the revivalist upsurge of the nineteenth century. Imdādullāh's spiritual authority and claim to leadership was also buttressed and legitimized by his visions and dreams.

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Sūfis have considered dreams to be important since very early times. Dreams serve different purposes: to legitimize various individuals or institutions; to reclaim the knowledge of the past; to see visions that convey spiritual insight and understanding. ‘Dreams of initiation’ (called the ‘Uwaysī tradition) are relatively common in Sufism. As Robert Rozehnal writes, these visions are not regarded by Sūfis simply as nocturnal hallucinations, but rather as a medium for revelation and inspiration that imparts vital ontological and spiritual truths.[2] Such dreams were important in the personal life of Imdādullāh and in his early bid for authority. They are reiterated in his *malfūzāt* in order to strengthen the divine nature of his claim to spiritual authority. As recorded in his *malfūzāt*, his spiritual initiation (*baiʿat-i-bātinī*) took place through a ‘dream of initiation’ in which Saiyid Ahmad had a prominent role.[3] Similarly, he joined Nūr Muhammad after a dream in which the Prophet placed his hand in the hand of Nūr Muhammad, signifying the latter’s initiation from him.[4] Such dreams, indicative of an intense longing (*shauq*) on the part of the disciple, are also based on the widespread belief that *shaikh*s and their disciples are bound together in a primordial relationship. ‘Dreams of initiation’ hold an especially prominent place in the personal history of Chishtī-Sābrīs and were valued as a priceless source of guidance and inspiration. Thus, when Imdādullāh was in Mecca, and some people explained that they had been instructed in their dreams to do *baiʿat* on his hands, he replied:

> It is a strange matter that you people see such dreams and then develop so much faith in me, although I have no *kamal* [excellence] in me. It is just God’s benevolence that he has hidden my faults […].[5]

(p.199) Besides his ‘dreams of initiation’, Imdādullāh had visions of the Prophet which served to bolster his leadership. He is not known to have enrolled any disciples in the Chishtī-Sābrī order prior to two ‘spontaneous dreams’ of the Prophet, understood by himself and by his followers as signs of his near-future popularity among the common people and the scholars. According to his own account, while he was meditating at Medina during his first hajj in 1845, he had a vision of the Prophet tying a turban around his (Imdādullāh’s) head. This was interpreted as a grant of *ijāzat* and permission to enrol disciples.[6] After his return to Thanabhawan, another vision of the Prophet was understood as a prophecy that a large number of *ʿulamā* would join him.[7] While visions of the Prophet are considered to be propitious by all Muslims and are greatly cherished by them, in Sufism they constitute proof of a Sūfī master’s power and blessings and confirm his closeness to God. A famous Hadīs—‘Whoever has seen me has seen me truly, and Satan cannot take my form’—authenticates such a visionary experience of the Prophet.[8] Both these dreams marked the beginning of Imdādullāh’s career as a successful Sūfī master.

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While visions of the Prophet are rare, spiritual guidance can also come through dreams of one's *shaikh* or even the early spiritual masters of a *silsilah*. For instance, while narrating the financial problems he initially faced in Mecca after his migration there, Imdādullāh recalled a dream of Shaikh Muʿīn-ud-dīn Chishtī, after which the problems were resolved.[9] Especially in times of doubt or need, such lucid dreams of Sūfi masters—both past and present—provided clarity and comfort.

There were other factors also that contributed to enhancing Imdādullāh's prestige among the *ʻulamā*. Although he was not himself an *ʻālim*, nor taught according to the prescribed standards of the age, a cursory glance at the list of his *khalīfah*s shows that a majority of them were *ʻulamā*, *muftī*s, or *qāzī*s. It was thought that it was his personal charisma that enabled him to attract them to his mystic fold. Thus, according **(p.200)** to Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī (d. 1880), one of the earliest scholars to join him,

> People became Hājī sāhib's *murīd* after seeing one or other example of his excellence [*kāmāl*]. I became his *murīd* because of his knowledge [*ʻilm*].[10]

This knowledge (*ʻilm*) that Maulānā Qāsim alludes to was not gained through formal education; rather, it was Imdādullāh's *ʻilm-i-laduni* (inspired knowledge). Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī hints at this when he writes:

> Hazrat Hājī Sāhib had only studied till *kāfiya* [a celebrated grammatical work of Arabic] and we have studied so much that we can write another *kāfiya*. But his *ʻulūm* [knowledge] were such that in front of him, there was no reality of an *ʻālim*. However, he seldom spoke on technicalities.[11]

Imdādullāh's biographers compared his knowledge with that of the Prophets who receive it from God and not through any formal means. Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī says as much:

> Although externally he [Hājī Imdādullāh] was not a *maulvī* or an *ʻallāma* [a great scholar] of his times in *ʻilm-i-sharīʻat*, he was blessed with *ʻilm-i-laduni* [inspired knowledge] and was adorned with the blessed light of *ʻirfān* [knowledge of God].[12]

This inspired knowledge of Imdādullāh was also evident in his teaching of the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī. He had a great attachment to the *Masnavī*, which he considered a revelation from God through *ilhām* (inspiration). He had worked through the *Masnavī* at Delhi under Maulānā ʻAbdul Razzāq three times, and some portions under Maulānā Abul Hasan Kāndhlawī, both renowned students of Muftī Ilāhī Bakhsh. While in Mecca, Imdādullāh used to deliver lectures on the *Masnavī*, which became so popular that they even impressed a traveller from Egypt who belonged to the spiritual lineage of Maulānā Rūmī.[13] Although his lectures were **(p.201)** delivered in Urdu, his eloquent recitation of the verses

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entranced a *shaikh* from Constantinople.[14] He taught the *Masnavī* with such an intensely passionate devotion that a listener would feel inwardly transformed and experience different spiritual states (*hāl*) descending on him.[15]

The close association with the *'ulamā* also increased mutual respect and admiration. Imdādullāh had high regard for the *'ulamā* and considered it an honour to be associated with their *jamā'at* (group).[16] He believed it to be a group that 'holds fast to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnat of the Prophet and the *khulafā'-i-Rāshidīn*' and always works towards *ittihād* (accord) in the community. Significantly, in his categorization of *'ulamā*, he included not only the *mufassirūn* (commentators on Islamic texts), *muhaddisūn* (scholars of Hadīs), and *fuqahā'* (who ascertain the religious parameters of all actions), but also the *Sūfiyā*, who derive knowledge from the above groups and 'maintain distance from bigotry and act according to Qur'ān and Sunnat and the consensus of community (*ijmā'*). Those Sūfīs who are not experts in the science of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) refer to the *fuqahā'* and follow those issues on which the *fuqahā'* agree.'[17] Thus, for Imdādullāh, both *'ulamā* and Sūfīs were complementary to one another and therefore should operate collaboratively.

In his letters from Mecca, Imdādullāh frequently reminded his Indian disciples to consult *'ulamā*, whom he considered heirs of the Prophets (*wāris-ul-ambiyā'*), on questions of religious or personal conduct, even if they were regarding devotional practices.[18] He inculcated great respect and love towards two of his earliest *khalīfah*s, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad **(p.202)** Gangohī (d. 1905) and Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī. This is evident from several of his letters. He considered Maulānā Qāsim as his 'spokesperson', perhaps an analogy with Shams Tabrez being the 'speaker' for Maulānā Rūmī:

> God has made Maulvī Muhammad Qāsim like a spokesperson for me. Whatever comes in my heart, he can explain through words. For I do not know the specialist idioms [*istilāhāt*] of an *'ālim* and therefore cannot explain it myself.[19]

In his letters he urged his followers to seek explanations for devotional practices and other matters from them, and to consider them as his representatives in India. His closeness with Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī can be seen from his remark:

> None is competent to speak a word against you ahead of this *faqīr* [Hājī Imdādullāh]. Whoever is respectful towards me will always be respectful towards you.[20]

Even in his treatise on devotional rituals, *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, he writes:

> All those who have respect and devotion for me should consider Maulvī Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib and Maulvī Muhammad Qāsim, who have achieved excellence in the inward and outward [sciences], as my representatives,

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> and give them an even higher status than me. Although they are my disciples, the matter should have been the other way round and they should have been in my position. Their company should be considered a blessing, since people like them are few in these times and the paths of *sulūk* explained in this book should be practised under their guidance.[21]

This highly respectful and appreciative attitude towards the *'ulamā* and their knowledge is unprecedented in the Chishtī-Sābrī order. It marks the blurring of the boundaries between the two traditions and a conscious policy of the leadership to extend and deepen collaboration between **(p.203)** them. Hājī Imdādullāh's esteem for the *'ulamā* among his disciples was reciprocated by their regard for him as a Sūfī *pīr*. A *shaikh* from Rampur, visiting Thanabhawan, was so overwhelmed to see the dedication of disciples that he told Imdādullāh:

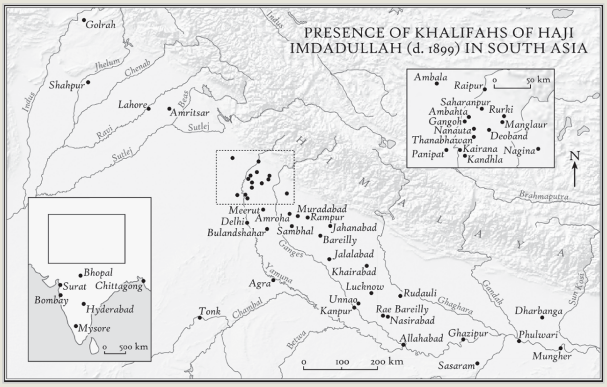
> Some of your associates have elevated you in rank above the *mashā'ikh* of the past, and they say that even if Hazrat Shiblī or Junaid Baghdādī had been alive now, we would not have left our *shaikh*, and we would not have turned to them for guidance.[22]

Hājī Imdādullāh's success in drawing *'ulamā* to him marks a high point in the trend towards Sūfi–*'ālim* integration. What is remarkable is how quickly his authority was established, and how long it was sustained even after his migration from north India to Mecca. Among the Chishtī-Sābrīs it was unprecedented that in a *shaikh*'s absence from the subcontinent, such a large following could be sustained among the *'ulamā* of north India. Prior to his migration to the Hijaz, Imdādullāh is known to have appointed only one *khalīfah*, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī. All others received investiture or *ijāzat* from him after 1860, either through letters or during their visits to the Haramain. In spite of this, the list of his *khalīfah*s is significantly large, attesting to his wide popularity.[23] His fame was not restricted to the subcontinent. His *malfūzāt* suggest his growing recognition at Mecca. The fact that his major work on Sūfī practices, *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, was translated into Arabic (from Persian) and then printed during his lifetime for the benefit of disciples who came from non-Persian and non-Urdu speaking lands, suggests his wide popularity.[24] His lectures (*dars*) on Maulānā Rūmī's *Masnavī* at the Holy Mosque in Mecca and at **(p.204)** the Madrasah-i-Sawlatia (founded by Rahmatullāh Kairānwī) quickly became famous. A number of the *'ulamā* of Mecca developed trust in him and among his confidants we find the names of Shaikh Yahyā Pāshā Dāghistānī, Fanīsī Shāzilī, Ibrāhīm Rāshidī, Ahmad Dahlān, and Ahmad Zainī.[25]

Imdādullāh's *khalīfah*s in India and at Mecca can be broadly classified into three groups: firstly, those who did *bai'at* and were personally trained by him, such as Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim, Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, and Muhammad Husain Allahābādī, among others. Secondly, those who were already associates of some other Sūfī order and were later enrolled in the Chishtī-Sābrī

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order by Imdādullāh, such as Pīr Mihr ʻAlī Shāh, Maulānā Anwārullāh Hyderabādī, Maulānā Shāh Sulaimān of Phulwari, and others. They received training from him or his senior *khalīfah*s. Thirdly, there were those who were trained by Imdādullāh's *khalīfah*s and were given *khilāfat* by him either on recommendation or because of their own merit, such as Maulānā Khalīlul Rahmān Sahāranpurī and Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Deobandī, among others.[26]



Map 5.1 Presence of the *Khalifah*s of Hājī Imdādullāh (d. 1899) in South Asia

Source: Based on Hafiz Fuyuzul Rahman, *Hazrat Haji Imdadullah aur unke khulafa*, and Imdad Sabri, *Haji Imdadullah aur unke khulafa*. Cartography by Alexander J. Kent.

His *khalīfah*s came from different walks of life and contributed immensely in the field of education and *tablīgh* during the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Hājī Imdādullāh commended teaching as an appropriate occupation for his disciples and encouraged them to continue in their work of religious instruction. He therefore left a strong legacy for the provision of traditional religious education to the Muslim masses.[27] When one of his teachers, Maulānā Ahmad ʻAlī, who (after the 1857 disruptions) had taken a job under a rich Calcutta merchant, came to Mecca, Imdādullāh advised him to quit that job and apply his vast knowledge for the benefit of Muslims.[28] Imdādullāh was **(p.205) (p.206)** ambivalent about his disciples working in print shops. Although his letters show his keen interest in the printing of several works, he probably disliked his more learned disciples involving themselves in work at a press that 'keeps a person busy from morning till evening'. He wrote to Maulānā Qāsim Nānautawī (who was associated with Matbaʻ-i-Ahmadī in Delhi and Matbaʻ-i-Mujtabāi in Meerut), suggesting that it would be better if he quit that job and instead devoted himself to teaching.[29]

It is this dedication to the cause of religious education that made Imdādullāh a spiritual forefather of many institutions, such as Dārul ʻulūm, Nadwatul ʻulamā, Mazāhirul ʻulūm, and the many other smaller *madrasah*s. It is reported that Qāsim Nānautawī met Imdādullāh at Mecca in 1861 and they discussed the formation of Dārul ʻulūm.[30] Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī himself affirms this:

> Among all the *madrasah*s established for religious education, the first is the *madrasah-i-Deoband*. And its founders were among the select disciples of Hazrat [Hājī Imdādullāh], who had turned their attention to this cause.[31]

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Besides Qāsim Nānautawī, a large number of *ʻulamā* who were among the benefactors of this seminary, such as Zulfiqār ʻAlī (d. 1904), Maulānā Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, Maulānā Yaʻqūb Nānautawī (d. 1884), Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, and Maulānā ʻĀbid Husain (d. 1912), were counted among the premier disciples of Imdādullāh. He expressed extreme happiness over the establishment of the seminary in Deoband and advised his followers to continue giving religious instructions to ʻwhoever comes to you, without distinguishing if he is worthy or not'.[32] From Mecca, Imdādullāh took a keen interest in the working of the *madrasah* in Deoband and annually sent an amount of twelve rupees towards its upkeep.[33] In a letter written to Maulānā Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, the *muhtamim* of the *madrasah*, he instructs him:

> **(p.207)** My friend, since you are the *muhtamim* of the *madrasah* it is incumbent on you to stay mindful about certain things. You should not be lenient without reason with anybody and should always maintain your honesty and integrity. If you show undue leniency towards someone, you might be answerable tomorrow. Secondly, the treasury of *madrasah* belongs to *bayt-ul-māl* and should be used properly and not for meting out loans or donations. Let no misuse [of the funds] be possible. Thirdly, although all the teachers of the *madrasah* are friends and associates of this *faqīr* [Hāji Imdādullāh], I am more attached for some reasons to Maulvī Muhammad Yaʻqūb Sāhib [son of Mamlūk ʻAlī]. Therefore, if he ever shows disinterest in the activities of *madrasah* you should ask him about it and, God willing, he would understand.[34]

It also appears that when Hājī ʻĀbid Husain planned to migrate to Mecca, it was Hājī Imdādullāh who advised that it was better for him to stay in Hindustan and work for the *madrasah* than to come to the Hijaz.[35] This shows that he gave precedence to efforts that benefited the community at large over individual or personal preference. When the *madrasah* was established and he was asked to pray for its betterment, Imdādullāh wrote a letter to Maulānā Rafīʻ-ud-dīn, suggesting that it was actually the result of his prayers that this task has been accomplished:

> You are telling me that you people have established the *madrasah*. And you are unaware how often our foreheads touched the ground in prostration, in prayer that God may create a source for strengthening Islam in Hindustan and for the defence of religious knowledge.[36]

Dārul ʻulūm continued to attract Imdādullāh's attention and concern throughout his life and a large number of *ʻulamā*, from among the founders of this seminary or from those trained there, went to Mecca to seek his blessings and guidance. To be associated with a *madrasah* in any capacity was the need of the hour and this is reiterated several times in Imdādullāh's letters:

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> Those people who have been associated with seminaries like Nadwa have been blessed for creating consensus among Muslims, and they have benefited **(p.208)** from its advantages. They can form a vehicle for the revival of Muslims in Hindustan. *Faqīr* [Hājī Imdādullāh] is continuously praying that whichever action is meant to strengthen Muslims should receive Divine help and God should protect it from all envy and blame.[37]

Of fourteen scholars who attended the meeting at Kanpur in 1892, at which the formation of Nadwatul ‘ulamā was decided, seven were *khalīfah*s of Hājī Imdādullāh.[38] Welcoming this meeting and the subsequent establishment of the seminary, he wrote from Mecca:

> It is a good fortune for Muslims that such a *jalsah* has been held in Hindustan with such fanfare at Kanpur, Lucknow and Bareilly. Thousands of Muslims and hundreds of ‘ulamā and *mashā’ikh* from far and near participated in it. This is in reality the result of support [for this cause] from the Almighty. The Sustainer of the Worlds has helped Muslims in this age by the establishment of Nadwatul ‘ulamā and it should be considered a Divine blessing. Muslims need to support this institution both materially and also participate in it and should benefit from its blessings.[39]

Imdādullāh was equally concerned about those *madrasah*s which operated on a comparatively smaller scale, such as Madrasah-i-Qāsmī in Muradabad or Madrasah ‘Arabiya Islāmiya in Amroha. He encouraged one of his *khalīfah*s, ‘Abdul Samī ‘bedil’, to give attention to a *madrasah* of Qārī Hafīz Ahmad, since ‘it does not get regular support from charity, students from poor families are being educated there and important matters relating to religion are taught there, beside the usual subjects’.[40]

Thus, Imdādullāh remained in close regular contact with his ‘*ulamā* disciples and was fully apprised of the happenings in India. His letters, which run into several collections, show his constant awareness of and participation in South Asian affairs. He urged his disciples to write to **(p.209)** him about their spiritual conditions or worldly needs.[41] This is because he considered that the spiritual advancement of a person is not possible if his *pīr* is not fully aware of his condition. His letters repeatedly tell his disciples to think of him as well-aware of their actions and to believe that he is always close to them. An overview of his letters (written in Urdu and Persian) highlight his various concerns. These may be broadly categorized into:

> a) Letters dealing with personal matters—the death of relatives, his property (which he had handed over to his brother in India), initial problems in Mecca, the conditions of hajj, or the arrival of pilgrims. An important concern in some of these personal letters was the issue of widow remarriage. Imdādullāh felt the need, as his predecessor Saiyid

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Ahmad had done, to eradicate the negative attitude to widow remarriage among Muslims in India. He encouraged his disciple Hakīm Ziā'-ud-dīn Rāmpurī to marry a widow by the name of Bībī Hafīz-un-Nisā, 'after consulting the 'ulamā'. Regarding the prohibition of widow remarriage as contrary to Islamic tenets, he reprimanded Sa'īd-un-Nisā for being angry with her sister who had remarried, and he refused to accept her gift until she reconciled with her sister.[42]

b) Morale-boosting letters in a period of political and social turmoil: He continually encouraged his disciples not to lose heart and to stay focused, to remain devoted to their tasks without thinking about the results. He believed that works done with the right intention and with true commitment are blessed with divine help and guidance.[43]

c) Letters written in Persian offering spiritual and moral guidance to his disciples: He often suggested special incantations ('*amal*s) to overcome a particular spiritual or material problem, told the disciples to perform a particular kind of *zikr*, recommended the **(p.210)** reading of his devotional manual *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, or suggested consulting Qāsim Nānautawī or Rashīd Ahmad in case of any doubts.[44] At times he sent disciples whom he had initiated in Mecca but could not give time to their training, to Rashīd Ahmad or Qāsim Nānautawī, with instructions to guide them in their spiritual journey.[45]

d) Letters concerned with the spread of traditional religious education: This was a major concern of Hājī Imdādullāh for the Muslims of the subcontinent, and a very large portion of his correspondence is devoted to it. He constantly urges his disciples to initiate whoever comes to them with this intention and to devote themselves to providing guidance and support by educating Muslims about their religion. These letters also reveal the nature of the transformed Chishtī-Sābrī orientation, now committed to building the spiritual development of Muslims, but on the basis of a sound religious education.

e) Letters related to the publication of relevant texts: Imdādullāh expressed special interest in the printing of Rūmī's *Masnavī*—this was done on his advice but not completed during his lifetime. He was no less interested in the printing of his own works, especially *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*. This work was translated and printed in Arabic during his lifetime. Imdādullāh would often ask his disciples in India to send him books printed in India. He asked for copies of Qur'ān with the Urdu translation and exegesis of 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās (probably printed at the press of Munshī Mumtāz 'Alī). In one letter he acknowledges receipt of twenty-five copies of 'pocket Qur'āns' or *humail sharīf* from Hājī Muhammad Zuhūr-ud-dīn of Deoband, and mentions that they are highly prized in the Hijaz.[46]

(p.211) f) Letters concerned with harmonizing the different strands of religious thought: In this correspondence, Imdādullāh tries to discourage

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his followers from debating what he felt were trivial issues, lest doing so weaken the community's solidarity. This is discussed more fully below.

Although Imdādullāh had close connections with the *'ulamā*, he was primarily a Sūfī who stood for moderate reform of Sūfī practices. How far his followers from among the *'ulamā* subscribed to his views on Sūfī practices such as *samā'*, *'urs*, or *mīlād-un-nabī* (celebration of the birthday of the Prophet), among others, is difficult to ascertain. Certainly, differences did emerge over the legality of certain rituals. Imdādullāh downplays such differences by claiming that they are similar to differences that existed among the Companions of the Prophet, and he insists that they do not in any way affect his love and respect for the *'ulamā* of Deoband.[47] As late as 1895, in a letter to his *khalīfah* 'Abdul Samī' 'bedil', Imdādullāh says it is no surprise that such differences exist, for, 'when has the entire world accepted one person's viewpoint? Only select people have subscribed to it.' He further advises, 'you need to continue in your work and do not concern yourself with what others are doing. You will be answerable for your own actions [on the Day of Judgement] and what use will be their actions for you?'[48] In the same letter he permits 'Abdul Samī' to print one of his major works, *Faisla haft mas'la*, in which Imdādullāh has expressed his views on some controversial practices but also his inability to offer further explanations. Instead, he holds that 'Abdus Samī''s own work, titled *Anwār-i-sāti'ah* (published in Delhi in AH 1323), is the best explanation and defence of his *risāla*.

Letters of Imdādullāh collected in *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah* are significant in this connection. They are mostly addressed to 'Abdul Samī' 'bedil', written after 1885, and relate to differences that had emerged between Imdādullāh and some of his followers at Deoband. In 1885, a four-page *fatwā* (printed from Matba'-i-Hāshmī, Meerut), signed by the *'ulamā* of Deoband, Gangoh, and three Ahl-i-Hadīs *'ulamā*, condemned certain practices, particularly *'urs*, *fātiha* (the custom of reciting certain verses of the Qur'ān and distributing food in order to bless a departed soul), and **(p.212)** *mīlād-un-nabī*. Soon after, it was followed by a 24-page *fatwā* (printed by the same press) condemning these practices as *bid'at*. 'Abdul Samī' wrote *Anwār-i-sāti'ah* in 1885 by way of rejoinder. This was greatly appreciated by Imdādullāh who esteemed its contents as 'in accordance to *Faqīr*'s views and path'.[49]

Imdādullāh's support for 'Abdul Samī''s work should not be seen as participation in the debate. He made this intention clear in a letter to 'Abdul Samī': the main objective of the book, he says, should be 'to offer explanations of these controversial topics … with no attempt to incite further deliberations or debates'. For this reason, he advised 'Abdul Samī' not to mention any name (such as 'Deobandī' or 'Gangohī') that might be taken to mean that the book is against a particular group. Its language should be such that it neither offends 'friends', nor strive to appease 'opponents'.[50] When the rejoinder was first printed, 'Abdul Samī' had apparently used strong words in his rebuttal, which

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Imdādullāh asked him to soften. The new edition that came out in 1890 follows this advice.

At the end of *Anwār-i-sātiʻah*, Imdādullāh explains his own position on matters where his views differ from those of the *ʻulamā*. After stressing that he adheres to the Hanafī school of thought and has an inclination towards Sufism, he writes:

> Hence, the way and belief of *faqīr* [meaning himself] is that those issues over which both these groups [the Hanafī *ʻulamā* and Sūfīs] are in agreement, *faqīr* follows them without any deliberation. In those matters where the two vary in opinion, the matter will be judged as follows: If the difference is related to issues concerning *haqāʼiq* [Divine realities], *maʻrifat* [gnosis], or *tauhīd* [monotheism], then the Sūfī position regarding them will be followed since this group belongs to men of intuition and spiritual enquiry, while **(p.213)** the ʻulamā only give importance to the reason. If the difference is related to issues concerning ways of worship or affairs of daily life then it will be judged as follows: In case the matter relates to *aʻmāl* (actions) which occur through the physical body then consultation will be done with ʻulamā, but if these *aʻmāl* are *qalbī* [of the heart] then the views of the Sūfīs will be given precedence.[51]

Letters in *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah* also show Imdādullāh's concern and apprehensions regarding the differences between himself and the *ʻulamā* on such issues. He repeatedly wrote that if he has any anguish in his heart it is only because of these differences among 'the brothers of *tarīqat*'.[52] When Maulānā Khalīlul Rahmān wrote *al-Barāhīn-i-qātiʻah* in rebuttal of 'Abdul Samī''s rejoinder, Imdādullāh sent a detailed letter to Khalīl-ul-Rahmān, expressing his concern over this debate and reiterating the need to establish communal accord and harmony as he had advocated in his *Faisla haft masʼla*:

> From all regions of Hind such as Bengal, Bihar, Madras, Deccan, Gujarat, Bombay, Punjab, Rajputana, Rampur and Bhawalpur etc. newspapers have arrived adding to my anguish and concern. The main cause for this is *al-Barāhīn-i-qātiʻah* and similar other works. […] My friend, such issues which are beyond the understanding of the common man, and discussions over which may lead to disturbance or differences among the people, their divulgence is against wisdom and Sharīʻat. […] My friend, it is strange that one small group should consider itself on the path of guidance and rectitude and consider all other scholars and ʻulamā to be misled. […] My friend, does any *ʻālim* have the right to force other ʻulamā to follow his path? Then why are we hearing discussions on the same issues repeatedly. […] The divulgence of such unimportant issues, which are beyond the understanding of the common man and which have the risk of creating tensions and differences among the people, only increases opposition and prevents people from getting blessings and is against the need of the time.

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> […] This has tarnished the image of Dārul ‘ulūm,and *faqīr* had since the very beginning advised not issuing *fatwā*s on such controversial matters and affixing a seal or signature on *fatwā*s issued by Wahhābī or *ghair-muqallid* scholars. […] In the current situation, it is compulsory for ‘ulamā like yourself that they stay away **(p.214)** from such disputes, and endeavour to remove doubts in the minds of people about their religion, and give them solace and peace. See how the members of Arya Dharma have taken out a *risāla* titled *Takzīb barāhīn-i-Ahmadiya* and have disrespected Islam and Prophet. In such conditions it is important that instead of debating among ourselves, such actions [as that of Arya Dharma] should be condemned. It is imperative that Prophet’s noble character and beautiful habits should be brought before the people and for this purpose *mīlād-un-nabī* is a useful way.[53]

Literary Compositions of Hājī Imdādullāh

In his absence from the subcontinent, Imdādullāh’s contacts with the *‘ulamā* were maintained mainly through his writings and letters. His works constitute a blueprint of the programme that he envisioned for their training and of the different spiritual or devotional rituals that he subscribed to. His writings, therefore, form the best source for understanding the thoughts, teachings, and devotional rituals espoused by Chishtī-Sābrīs in the nineteenth century. They reflect a substantial continuation of the earlier Chishtī-Sābrī devotional themes. However, within this continuity, subtle ideas are introduced that show Imdādullāh’s engagement with the accelerating changes that surrounded him. Besides his letter collections and *malfūzāt*, Imdādullāh authored nearly a dozen works in Urdu and Persian poetry and prose.[54] In order of composition, these are:

> a) *Risāla Dard nāmah-i-ghamnāk:* An Urdu *masnavī* of about 350 verses written in Delhi between 1833 and 1835.[55] It is an account of the melancholy and sadness of a person desiring union with his beloved, and its principal theme is *‘ishq-i-haqīqī*. The poem brings out the lover’s experience of tumult, lamentation, shame, restlessness, and anguish as he longs for union with God. It ends with a petition for patience, mastery of desire, and contentment with the Will of God. The morals which the poem tries to instil **(p.215)** in its readers are the qualities of servitude, contentment, and resignation to God’s Will, which distinguish the pious driven by the Love of God.[56]
>
> b) *Ghizā-i-rūh:* An Urdu *masnavī* composed in 1847, comprising some 830 verses on the same metre as the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī and in a similar style. It shows Imdādullāh’s great attachment to its model: first a subtle point is mentioned and then explained allegorically. The *masnavī* starts with a prayer to God and praises of the Prophet and Caliphs, followed by a eulogy for his *murshid* Miānjī Nūr Muhammad. It is intended for the spiritual training of novices on the path of *sulūk* and

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teaches other-worldliness, *tauhīd*, *'ishq-i-ilāhī*, the benefit of good manners (*ādāb*), and ways to succeed spiritually in this life. These themes are expressed in a simple but elegant way and as a defence against incitements of the lower self (*nafs*), evil inspirations (*waswas*), and sinful actions.[57]

c) *Masnavī Jihād-i-akbar:* This *masnavī*, written in 1851, contains about 650 verses. Its style is on the lines of *Dāstān-i-Amīr Hamza* and *Tilism hosh rubā*. As its title suggests, the central theme is struggle against the lower self or *nafs* and reform of the heart and soul (*bātin*). The *masnavī*, with the help of certain allegorical characters representing positive and negative figures, depicts a battle between *rūh* (soul) and *'aql* (wisdom) against *nafs* (the lower self) and *shaitān* (the devil).[58]

d) *Masnavī Tuhfat-ul-ushāq:* Once, while at Thanabhawan, Imdādullāh was reading from *Nafahāt-ul-uns* of Maulānā Jāmī to his disciples. After hearing the account of Bībī Tuhfa, some of them, including Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd, suggested that it should be versified so that it might be read by everyone and students of *tasawwuf* would realize the importance of *'ishq-i-haqīqī*.[59] This led to the composition of *Tuhfat-ul-ushāq* in 1864. This *masnavī* is also **(p.216)** based on the metre of Maulānā Rūmī's *Masnavī* and describes the sufferings that a girl overwhelmed by *'ishq-i-ilāhī* had to undergo. It aims to instil love of God and readiness to sacrifice everything in the way of God, and is interspersed with the truths of *ma'rifat* experienced by a *sālik*.[60]

e) *Ziā'-ul-qulūb:* This is an Islamic devotional manual written in Persian and presents the core teachings of Hājī Imdādullāh. It is his most important work, which he rightly considered as a perfect *pīr* (*pīr-i-kāmil*). In a letter, he wrote:

> There is no important aspect of *sulūk* which has been left out of this book. The book *Ziā'-ul-qulūb* is a perfect *murshid*. Considering it as your *pīr*, you should always keep it beside you as if it were a *ta'wīz* (amulet). If it seems difficult at certain places, you should either write to me in a letter or ask the *maulvīs* [Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī and Qāsim Nānautawī] about it.[61]

Ziā'-ul-qulūb was written at Mecca in 1865 in Persian prose, at the request of Hāfiz Muhammad Yūsuf (son of Hāfiz Zāmin Shahīd, and a *khalīfah* of Imdādullāh). The reason for writing this manual is explained in Imdādullāh's introduction:

> Some of my friends, specially my revered associate Hāfiz Muhammad Yūsuf, the son of Hazrat Hāfiz Muhammad Zāmin Shahīd Farūqī Chishtī, insisted and urged that the devotional rituals that the Chishtī-Sābrī-Quddūsī *khāndān* have practised, and the meditations and practices that they performed in their routines, should be collected and explained in book form so that they might

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> be followed and prove useful to the disciples. He suggested that my being in Mecca has created a distance between us […] and in this situation the training of disciples can only be done through books.[62]

Imdādullāh took a keen interest in the printing of this book and gave the task to Maulvī ʻAbdul Hakīm. In a letter to Qāsim Nānautawī, he advised him regarding this work, saying:

> **(p.217)** If you consider it right and your other associates agree, then you should send a copy of *Ziāʼ-ul-qulūb* to Maulvī ʻAbdul Hakīm, the brother of Shaikh Ilāhī Bakhsh. He wants it to be printed and wrote a letter to me in that regard. He wrote to me that ʻif you [Imdādullāh] can provide a copy to me, I will get it printed according to your wishes and I will send the printed copies to Maulvī Muhammad Qāsim and Maulvī Rashīd Ahmad and others. It is up to them to give it to whoever they like. And if Maulvī Qāsim does not object and can afford some time, then he should kindly come to Meerut and get it printed under his supervision from the press of Munshī Mumtāz ʻAlī Sāhibʼ.[63]

The work was eventually printed by Matbaʻ Mujtabāī (Meerut) in 1867, just two years after it had been written. It became popular in Mecca as well and was translated into Arabic by Maulānā Muhammad Husain Ilahābādī, about which he informs Maulānā Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī in a letter:

> The reason for writing is that your ʻspiritual brothersʼ (*pīr-bhāi*) who are in Mecca, Medina, Egypt and Daghistan etc. who do not know Persian or Hindi are therefore unable to learn the way of *sulūk* and other *aurād* [of the Chishtī order]. It is for this reason that my revered associate Maulvī Muhammad Husain Sāhib has taken the Arabic translation of *Ziāʼ-ul-qulūb* to Allahabad for the purpose of printing.[64]

Imdādullāh expressed his happiness over the printing of this translation.[65] The Urdu translation of it also appeared during his lifetime; it was done by Nizām-ud-dīn Kairānwī and Maulvī Muhammad Beg under the title *Tasfiyat-ul-qulūb*. It was printed in 1910 by Matbaʻ Mujtabāī in Delhi and reprinted in 1927. An English translation was also made by Qudratullāh Shahāb.[66]

Ziāʼ-ul-qulūb sets out the methods of training, scripts for proper recitation, and directions for the correct performance of actions **(p.218)** that, if done rigorously, can utterly transform a person. Scott Kugle has explained that this text has less to do with metaphysics than meta-psychology: it is about how the human body can be trained to adopt postures and movements that have transcendent ethical effects, so that the body can itself become a mirror for a just cosmic order. The work gives instructions for the proper methods of recitation, movement, and

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contemplation that can realign the heart, revive the body, and allow the practitioner to 'imagine that you have died' to the self.[67]

In *Ziā'-ul-qulūb* Hājī Imdādullāh discusses three different ways of *sulūk*. First is the way of the pious and virtuous (*sulahā-wa-akhyār*) in which the aspirant has to fulfil the obligations of Sharī'at, such as prayers, fasting, recitation of the Qur'ān, hajj, and so on. According to him, following this path, it takes a long time to reach the destination (*ma'rifat*). The second way is that of undertaking spiritual exercises and austerities (*riyāzāt-wa-mujāhidāt*) through which one has to reform the self and convert all moral shortcomings into virtuous manners (*'ādāb*). The third way is that of the Shattārīs, which aims to imbibe *zikr-o-fikr* in daily routine and is the shortest route to achieve *ma'rifat*.[68]

Ziā'-ul-qulūb comprises four chapters, each describing the devotional practices, daily litanies, and prayers of the Chishtī, Qādirī, and Naqshbandī orders. The practice of *zikr* remains the main focus of the manual.[69] This work brings out the importance which Imdādullāh gave to *zikr* and other methods of mystic discipline based on a combination of bodily control and concentration, through repeated vocalizations of words and phrases from the Qur'ān and Traditions. The first (and longest) chapter deals with different forms of *zikr*, *murāqaba*, and *ahsghāl* practised in the **(p.219)** Chishtī order, after briefly mentioning the methods of *bai'at* and the importance of having a spiritual mentor. The second chapter deals with the mystic discipline and practices of the Qādirī order. The third chapter describes the Naqshbandī meditational practices in detail. The final chapter presents the various '*amal*s that Imdādullāh recommended to his disciples, such as the correct methods of reciting Qur'ān, of offering prayers, of performing *istikhāra* (induced dreams for guidance), and other voluntary rituals for daily routines. These '*amal*s are meant to be performed either on a daily basis after certain prayers or on certain days at particular times. Since *Ziā'-ul-qulūb* was written as a substitute for a spiritual master, it not only describes the proper ways of performing these devotional practices, but also discusses the hurdles that a student may encounter on his journey of *sulūk* and explains ways of overcoming them. The work concludes after offering certain advices for the benefit of the student and giving the *shajra* of Imdādullāh in four orders—Chishtī, Qādirī, Naqshbandī, and Suhrawardī.

f) *Irshād-i-murshid:* This is an abstract of *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, intended to serve as a brief introduction for beginners on the path of *sulūk*. It was written in 1876 and Imdādullāh used to give a signed copy of this work to those who took *bai'at* from him in Mecca. It contains a description of those *wazifāh*s, methods of *zikr*, and other devotional rituals that he considered important for attaining purification of the heart and overcoming the urges of *nafs*. The meditational exercises explained in this work are mostly those already discussed in fuller detail in *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*. The work

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concludes with the *shajras* of the four orders in which he had received *ijāzat*, along with a versified *shajra* of the Chishtī order.[70]

g) *Risāla dar bayān wahdat-ul-wujūd:* This letter was written in 1881, in response to certain questions asked by Maulānā ʻAbdul ʻAzīz Chishtī Amrohwī. Its distinguishing quality is its brevity and simplicity. Imdādullāh explains issues relating to this complex doctrine in a simple manner, which shows his expertise in and command of the topic.[71]

(p.220) h) *Faisla haft masʼla:* This work was an outcome of Imdādullāh's concern over the schisms and sects emerging in South Asian Islam. In his letters he repeatedly exhorted his disciples not to involve themselves in religious debates and to bring Muslims to a common platform instead, so that they may be welded into a single community. He regarded the *ʻulamā* as heirs of the prophets, in accordance with a Hadīs. He also reminded his disciples of their duty to provide *hidāyat* (guidance) and *islāh* (reform), and to work for the revival of the Prophet's Sunnat among the people. According to him, a true heir of the Prophet would always work to create *ittihād* (solidarity) among the believers.[72] He addressed the matter in a letter to Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī:

> This *faqīr* [Imdādullāh] is not grieved by the differences among ʻulamā since these differences have been blessings for the *ummat* of Prophet Muhammad and have given it a new vigour. What saddens me rather is that in today's volatile and turbulent times, which are full of seditions and anarchy, such differences when openly expressed have had a damaging effect on the community.[73]

He advised Rashīd Ahmad that in such a situation controversial topics need to be explained thoroughly, and should not be allowed to create unnecessary strife. Because of his dislike for *munāzarah* (debates), Imdādullāh asked his disciples Khalīl Ahmad Ambethwī and Mahmūd Hasan Deobandī to desist from participating in debates.[74] Once while he was in Thanabhawan, Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī was engaged in a dispute with Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī over a Hadīs. When the latter reached Thanabhawan to debate the issue with him, Imdādullāh successfully dissuaded him from doing so.[75] This dislike also had a higher spiritual reason as Imdādullāh felt that regardless of the matter of debate, competitive debating always generates egotism **(p.221)** (*nafsāniyat*) and therefore it is best to avoid such disputations. He believed that those *ʻulamā* who have taken their understandings to extremes provoke opposition and thus create divisions in the community. In another letter to Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, he advised him to follow a moderate path, and further clarified his own position:

> *Faqīr* [Imdādullāh] has always endeavoured to walk on the path and way of Shāh ʻAbdul ʻAzīz by making it his *dastūr-ul-ʻamal*. I have always regarded extremism (*ifrāt-o-tafrīt*) and commotion (*shor-o-*

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> *ghogha*) as wrong and unfortunate […]. In present times it would have been more appropriate to work for the eradication of suspicions, distrust and confusions among the people and to spread and promote Hanafī Law and Sūfī temperament, rather than follow those [extreme] ‘ulamā and popularise those issues which the entire world opposes.[76]

It was this concern of Imdādullāh that prompted him to write *Faisla haft mas’la*. It is an example of his moderate nature, spiritual expertise, and vast knowledge, and attempts to find a middle path on matters that divided the *‘ulamā*. In the preface to the work, explaining the purpose of the work, Imdādullāh writes:

> I wish to emphasise to all Muslims in general and my associates in particular that unity amongst us Muslims is the real key for our worldly progress and for getting Divine blessings. Unfortunately, certain religious matters have become a source of dispute and have led to evils and disturbances. This has resulted in wastage of the time of religious scholars on the one hand and loss of faith among the masses on the other. In reality, however, the differences in most of these issues lie not in their essence but only in wordings and expression. Being deeply concerned by the frustration these matters have caused to my associates in particular and to Muslims in general, I felt a profound need to write and publish a brief booklet concerning these matters, in the firm hope that the arguments and controversies would subside. Though at present there are several controversial matters, I have picked only those on which my associates differ. There are two reasons for this: firstly, controversial matters are so numerous that it is difficult to cover them all, and there is very little likelihood that my explanation would be accepted by scholars other than my **(p.222)** associates. Secondly, the differences among my associates are only on a few matters and on those my views will be accepted by my associates. These matters are seven, five of which involve Islamic practices and two come under belief. They are discussed in order of their level of controversy and I have mentioned my own views and practice regarding them. I pray to the Almighty that this attempt of mine becomes instrumental in eradicating the controversies and quarrels. […] I also wish to mention that nobody should waste their energies in publishing refutations of my views because I absolutely do not want to enter into a debate.[77]

A discussion on the seven controversial topics follows, after each of which he expresses the need to maintain unity and accord, and exhorts his followers ‘not to transgress moderation and to work for the benefit of Islam’.

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i) *Gulzār-i-maʿrifat:* This is an undated collection of *ghazals* (short poems) of Imdādullāh, copied out during his lifetime by his *khalīfah* Niyāz Ahmad. Some of these express praise of the Prophet, others are rapturous evocations of *ʿishq-i-ilāhī* and the aspiration for *maʿrifat*.[78]
j) *Nālā-i-Imdād Gharīb:* This is a small collection of *munājāt* (supplications in verse) written by Imdādullāh and Gharīb Sahāranpurī.[79]
k) *Hāshiya Masnavī Maulānā Rūmī:* We have already mentioned Imdādullāh's love of the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī.[80] He taught it with passion and eloquence at Mecca, and he instructed his disciples to develop an attachment to it. He wrote a brief *hāshiya* (marginal commentary) on Rūmī's *Masnavī* and took an active interest in its printing. He first gave the copy to Maulvī ʿAbdullāh, who was unable to do the task for a long time. He then wrote to Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, asking him to take the copy from ʿAbdullāh.[81] It was then passed to Maulānā Ahmad Hasan for printing and Imdādullāh asked Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī to help:

> **(p.223)** My friend Maulvī Ahmad Hasan Sāhib is taking a copy [of the *Masnavī*] for the purpose of printing it. You are also to work with him. Special attention should be given to checking and clarity, as well asto the quality of paper and printing. As of now it is in need of correction, and because of several mistakes the real meanings are lost. […] Also before this, a number of people approached me about printing it but I hesitated for fear of the mistakes. This time it is hoped that, God willing, the work will be completed properly.[82]

The first two *daftar*s (parts) were printed during the lifetime of Imdādullāh. On seeing them, he wrote:

> The first *juz* of the *Masnavī* has reached me and I was gladdened on seeing it. The greatness of *Masnavī sharīf* has been kept in mind by my friend [Maulvī Ahmad Hasan] and he has done justice to this great work.[83]

Through these various writings, Imdādullāh has explained the entire programme that a Chishtī-Sābrī disciple was supposed to follow. His central themes are individual and communal reform (*islāh*), inward (*bātinī*) purification, *maʿrifat*, and *ʿishq-i-ilāhī*. One finds in these works interesting and efficacious anecdotes on the pattern of the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, with morals for the heart, lessons in *sulūk* and *maʿrifat*, and advice on different ways of performing devotional rituals.

Hājī Imdādullāh as a Sūfī: Elements of Continuity in Chishtī-Sābrī Traditions

Although an authoritative figure among the *ʿulamā*, Hājī Imdādullāh remained primarily a Sūfī by temperament and practice. He gave precedence to inward knowledge (*ʿilm-i-bātin*) over formal education, and he asserted its superiority at

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several points in his writings.[84] That said, he called at the same time for a moderate reform of Sūfī rituals and institutions. He neither condemned Sūfī practices outright nor justified going to such extreme in those practices as might deviate the seeker from **(p.224)** realizing the true spiritual benefits from them. Moderation in devotional practices and harmony among different strands of thought was the main objective in his programme of reform. His approach towards Sūfī rituals combined the ardous passion and ecstasy of the Chishtī tradition with the sobriety and discipline of the Naqshbandī. His success in balancing these apparently contradictory feelings earned him the respect of the 'doctrinal' Sūfīs at Deoband and the admiration of the opposing faction, the Barelwī.

As a practising adherent of the Chishtī order, Imdādullāh continued its past traditions and rituals. At the same time, it was a primary concern for him to teach moderation and Sharī'at-mindedness in these practices, to search for a common platform for Sūfīs and *'ulamā*, and to manage accord between them. Thus, in perpetuating the main rituals of Chishtī Sufism, he introduced into them new meanings and motives to bring to mind, and refresh, their proper purpose. He devised ingenious ways to transform the self through the effort to embody the principles of the Qur'ān and Sunnat in daily practice, so as to internalize the basic tenets of Islam. This helped to make the rituals acceptable to both Sūfīs and *'ulamā*. The elements of continuity from Chishtī-Sābrī past which can be noticed are the following:

a) *Respect and reverence for one's spiritual master:* Like his spiritual predecessors, Imdādullāh considered respect and reverence for one's *shaikh* an indispensable condition of progress. He believed that if one desires to achieve *wilāyat* (the high rank of a *wālī*) in a little time, he must devote himself whole-heartedly to his *shaikh*.[85] He instructed his disciples to practice *tasawwur-i-shaikh*, that is, to concentrate the thought of their master in the expectation of being transformed through his spiritual power. This effort was needed in order to obtain spiritual grace since the *shaikh* was 'a vehicle for receiving divine blessing' (*mīzāb-i-rahmat-i-ilāhī*). However, Imdādullāh permitted this only if a disciple had competence to concentrate on the *bātin* (hidden) and not become distracted by the *zāhir* (the outside)—in the latter case, he felt that such effort might fall into the category of *shirk*.[86] Imdādullāh believed that the blessing (*faiz*) that comes through a *shaikh* can be of several **(p.225)** types, such as *faizān-i-hālī* (received through some action of a *shaikh*), or *faizān-i-qaulī* (received from some speech which he utters), or *faizān-i-fa'ilī* (through some action to be repeated by the *murīd*).[87] Finding the perfect *murshid* (*pīr-i-kāmil*)—one who has an authentic *shajra*, who follows the Sharī'at, and who has the ability to perfect the characters (*akhlāq*) of his followers and keep them away from carnal desires—was considered by him the first and most important step at the beginning of a

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seeker's spiritual journey. He emphasized the importance of the company of a spiritual master by citing different anecdotes of the classical Sūfīs' concern about *suhbat* (good company). Imdādullāh, in his own poetic compositions, showered praise on his spiritual mentor Nūr Muhammad—in some places quite eloquently—portraying him as a 'deputy of the Prophet in India' and seeking his company on the Day of Judgement.[88]

b) *The doctrine of wahdat-ul-wujūd:* Hājī Imdādullāh, like other Chishtīs, was a strong believer in the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*. In a letter dated 1881, responding to certain questions put by his disciple 'Abdul 'Azīz Amrohwī, Imdādullāh clarified his position on this doctrine.[89] While he categorically accepted the doctrine as 'true and correct with no doubt and ambiguity', he also added that it requires an assent of the heart and not of the tongue. Like some of the reformist Sūfīs of the eighteenth century, Imdādullāh held that there is greater benefit in not discussing this concept with the *'ulamā* or the common people, as 'the proofs and evidence of **(p.226)** this belief are very delicate and intricate and such that cannot be explained through the known terminology of the common people or *'ulamā-i-zāhir*.' Moreover, 'true Sūfīs in this age have stopped themselves from talking explicitly about it and explain it [only] to the select few through *ta'wīlāt* (allegorical interpretations).' Imdādullāh also felt that Sūfīs who have not completed their spiritual journey and become involved in this issue are harmed by it. He forcefully criticized 'a number of ignorant masters [who] have made this issue into a *maslak* (path/institution) and [who] boast of their spirituality in assemblies, and they do not realise that they have themselves deviated and they are also misguiding other Muslims.' Overall, he felt that it is best not to waste one's energy discussing and debating this issue if one asserts to it inwardly. Instead, one should invite people to God, draw their attention to the hereafter, and teach them *zikr* and other useful practices. He felt that 'when their hearts will be purified and they will reach the objective of *tazkiyat-un-nafs* (purification of soul), they will themselves understand the state of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*.' For this reason there are very few places in his works where he deals with this issue, albeit some of his poetic compositions overflow with *wujūdī* sentiment.[90]

c) *The practices of samā' and 'urs:* Like some of the more 'orthodox' Chishtī masters, Imdādullāh rejects the practice of *samā'* with musical instruments but stops short of rejecting music altogether. In this way he leaves the door half-open to the more extreme ecstatic adherents (*ahl-i-hāl*) of *samā'*, while affirming the position most frequently voiced in Chishtī sources: both to tolerate the resorting to *samā'* by others, and to continue it as integral to one's own outlook and practice. Imdādullāh also articulated the same rules for *samā'* that his spiritual masters had done: *samā'* is permissible if three conditions are met—it should not be the time of prayer; the location should be isolated and quiet; those **(p.227)**

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attending, including the singer, should be of a similar disposition (i.e., *tālibān-i-haq*, seekers of Truth) and intent on high spiritual purpose.[91] His own practice was that he never made preparations for a *samā'* assembly, nor spoke against others doing so. When a person asked him to listen to certain verses from the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, Imdādullāh pointed to his disciple Hāfiz Muhammad Husain and told the singer:

> He [Hāfiz Muhammad Husain] is a follower [of *samā'*]. I am completely ignorant of the art of music so how will I appreciate your expertise. You can expect more praise from him.[92]

Imdādullāh is known to have attended a *samā'* only once, while in Thanabhawan.[93] Probably because of several objectionable practices that came to be associated with such assemblies, he did not usually take part in them.

He held a similar view on the celebration of death anniversaries or '*urs*. He used to conduct the '*urs* of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad and also participated in the celebrations on the death anniversary of Shāh Sābir Bakhsh (d. 1821) in Delhi.[94] But probably because of violation of rules that earlier Sūfis had laid down, Imdādullāh did not attend these celebrations religiously, and on occasion excused himself by saying 'a feeble and infirm person like me does not have the heart for attending these occasions.'[95] He was also not against the practice of visiting graves (*ziyārat*) and often used to visit the Chishtī shrines at Kalyer, Delhi, and Panipat during his early life.[96] He permitted repair of the grave of Miānjī Nūr Muhammad, saying that it is his duty to maintain and look after the grave from which he has received so much blessing (*faiz*), but **(p.228)** also added that no construction should be raised over the grave as this is considered against the Sunnat of the Prophet.[97]

d) *'Other-worldliness':* Hājī Imdādullāh's inclination toward 'other-worldliness' also had a precedent in Chishtī traditions. However, this 'other-worldliness' was only to be experienced from the heart and did not mean a withdrawal from society. To his disciples he advised:

> Never go after the world [*duniā*] and do not make your hearts turn around its pleasures. Because this world is like a man's shadow—if a person goes after his shadow, it will keep moving away from him; but if he turns his back on it, it will pursue him. The same is the case with the world, for it is attracted towards those who abandon it and stays away from those who pursue it.[98]

Imdādullāh's view regarding interaction with people was that externally one should endeavour to please and assist the creatures of God but one's heart should always be devoted to the Creator. This he explained through the following analogy:

> If water comes inside a boat, it will make it sink. But if it remains outside, the boat will reach its destination. Similarly, love for wealth

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> and people should stay outside the heart and nothing should exist inside one's heart except the love of God [*'ishq-i-ilāhī*] and His remembrance.[99]

It was this view that led him to infuse new meanings into Chishtī rituals, whereby a disciple could operate in society once his heart had learnt to be preoccupied in remembrance of God. He believed that once the passion for divine love dominated a person, he would automatically be withdrawn from the attractions of the world. Therefore, when Qāsim Nānautawī once asked for his opinion on leaving his job (probably at the press) to devote himself to God, Imdādullāh replied that he should leave it when his condition was such that he does not feel the need to ask.[100] The true purpose of a **(p.229)** perfect spiritual guide was to turn the hearts of men towards God and detach them from the pleasures of the world.[101] The concept of *'ishq-i-ilāhī* had dominated the mystic thought of the Chishtī order. Its early masters believing in the maxim 'live for the Lord alone' had tried to envisage a routine where, ideally, not a single moment is spent on *ghair-haq* (other than Truth). In this regard Hājī Imdādullāh was closer to his spiritual ancestors than to the view held by Saiyid Ahmad and other reformists, who gave a higher place to *hubb-i-'aqlī* (love arising from intellect) over *hubb-i-'ishqī* (love of the lover).[102] His attachment to the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, which deals at great length with *'ishq-i-ilāhī*, must have reinforced his passion. Nowhere does this passion surface more eloquently than in the poetic compositions of Imdādullāh. His poems overflow with an intense passion of *'ishq-i-ilāhī* and through various allegories therein he strives to highlight its pre-eminence in the Sūfī discipline.

e) Chishtī-Sābrīs were known for their holistic approach to society and attempts to bridge gaps between different communities by bringing them to a common platform. Imdādullāh followed this approach in his effort to harmonize different strands of religious thought in South Asian Islam on a shared platform. For this he adopted a policy of *i'tidāl* (moderation), an attitude of *husn-i-zan* (favourable judgement), and *husn-i-'aqīdat* (favourable understanding of creedal positions) towards other groups in the Muslim community of South Asia. This is apparent in his training of his disciples, as also in his letters and other compositions.

Earlier in the eighteenth century, Sūfīs had sought this unity but the reform movements divided into schisms because they concentrated narrowly on particular points and ignored the broad vision of men like Shāh Walīullāh. The reformers claimed to function within the parameters of Islamic Law and those who failed to conform to their understanding of it were openly dubbed as *mushrik*, *kāfir*, or *jāhil*, and *fatwā*s were issued against them. Imdādullāh was primarily a Sūfī, one securely grounded in the Chishtī tradition of creating mutual trust and understanding. His **(p.230)** commitment to building accord

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within the Muslim community should therefore be seen as an extension and continuation of the Chishtī traditions. Although the reformist message of Walīullāhī *ʻulamā* may have contributed to some extent, his methods of *islāh* (reform) differed from those of the *ʻulamā*. He considered *ʻilm-i-bātin* (inward knowledge) indispensable even for the *ʻulamā* and once expressed his views on a certain *fatwā*, saying:

> Our ʻulamā, in the present times, write down in a *fatwā* whatever they can without any sign of respect. Even for *ʻulamā-i-zāhir*, *ʻilm-i-bātin* is important, for without it nothing can be properly judged.[103]

Ashraf ʻAlī Thānwī also hints at this when he expresses some surprise that Imdādullāh spoke with respect even for those against whom *ʻulamā* had levelled charges of unbelief, calling them *sāhib-i-bātin* (men of the heart) who may have deviated by mistake.[104] Imdādullāh considered it more important to purify the *bātin* (heart) of a person which, he felt, would spontaneously reform the person's actions in due time.[105] His firm faith was that regular *zikr* and prayers have the power in them to pull a person away from his wrong actions. He never turned down a request for *baiʻat* since he thought he might be held answerable on the Day of Judgement for refusing to guide a person who came to him seeking advice.[106] These instances showing his interest in *tablīgh* confirm Imdādullāh's closeness to Chishtī traditions and to some of the manners associated with the *Tablīghī jamāʻat* of the twentieth century.

(p.231) Imdādullāh was against adopting a narrow approach and believed that when one's vision is broadened, differences are automatically minimized.[107] His presence in Mecca, which was then the cradle of Muslim cosmopolitanism under Ottoman rule, must have influenced his outlook as well.[108] His broad, accommodating approach is best seen in his brief but highly significant work *Faisla haft masʼla*, which was one of his last writings. This *risāla*, as discussed above, deals with certain key points of contention which had emerged within the Muslim community at large and about which his views came to differ from some of his followers at Deoband. In explaining his position on these issues, he pleads for moderation and the avoidance of extremism. Among the controversies were celebration of the birth of the Prophet (*mīlād-un-nabī*), the practice of *qiyām* (standing in veneration of the Prophet while salutations are addressed to him in the *mīlād*), the practice of *fātiha* (reciting certain verses of Qurʼān and distributing food in order to bless a departed soul), celebration of *ʻurs* (death anniversaries), attending *samāʻ*, calling upon anyone other than God (*nidā-i-ghair-Allāh*), the permissibility of having a second congregational prayer (*jamāʻat-i-sāniya*), and the issues regarding *imkān-i-nazīr* (possibility of God creating a likeness of the Prophet Muhammad) and *imkān-i-kazb* (possibility of God telling a lie).[109]

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Since some of these issues and practices were condemned as *bid'at* by the *'ulamā*, Imdādullāh clarifies his understanding of the term as 'those practices that were originally not a part of religion but have come to be seen as a part of it and are practised with this intention'.[110] In reference to celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (*mīlād*), for example, he argues that it is impermissible only if one considers it as an obligatory part of religion (like prayer or fasting) and feels that he would be deprived of divine blessings if it is not performed on a particular date, or the *qiyām* is omitted, or food is not served—in all three respects he would be transgressing the limits of Sharī'at.[111] But if one considers the *zikr* of **(p.232)** the Prophet as an element of worship (*'ibādat*) and feels he can do it at anytime, merely fixing an occasion for practical convenience, then he would not have transgressed the bounds of the Sharī'at. Imdādullāh felt that Islam permitted some latitude by categorizing actions as *farz* (obligatory), *wājib* (necessary), *mustahab* (permissible), and *harām* (prohibited). Therefore the *'ulamā* should not insist people to renounce those practices that perhaps fall under the category of *mustahab*, while the people should not treat such 'permissible practices' as 'necessary' or 'obligatory'. Supporting the view of Muslim jurists, he points out that a 'permissible' action becomes an act of disobedience (*ma'siat*) when insisted upon and that one should insist only on the 'necessary' and 'obligatory' aspects of religion.[112]

His own practice in respect to *mīlād* was to take part in the event every year as a means of receiving blessings, and he got solace and spiritual uplift from *qiyām*. He justified *mīlād* by suggesting that the people of Mecca and Medina are unanimous on the permissibility of holding such assemblies and their consensus sufficed for him as a proof.[113] His advice was that since the opposing factions adduce evidence from the Sharī'at, it would be best if the *'ulamā* follow the view that they believe to be correct on the basis of their evidences, but must not label the opposing faction as *fāsiq* (corrupt) or *gumrāh* (deviator). He likened these differences to those that exist among different but accepted schools of law (Hanafī, Shafi'ī, Mālikī, Hambalī). He argues against contradicting one another, and exhorts all parties not to target *fatwā*s against each other, or sign or seal public documents to that effect. In the conclusion to his *risāla* he sets out an accommodative approach:

> If people who support *qiyām* happen to enter into the company of those who do not, it is better not to insist on holding *qiyām* in that meeting. If however, those who do not support *qiyām* happen to enter into the company of those who do, they should join in the *qiyām* as well. […] In brief do not oppose these things where they are [established] practice but do not invent them where they are not [established]. […] Those who support *qiyām* should accommodate the opposing faction, assuming that the latter's stand is based upon their own interpretation […]. Similarly those who oppose *qiyām* should accommodate its supporters assuming that the latter's stand is based upon their interpretations **(p.233)** together with

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their being overwhelmed by love of the Prophet, and that they give permission to other Muslims with good intentions.[114]

Imdādullāh advises the *ʻulamā* to criticize any excesses of practice and not the practice itself—if they happen to disapprove it—and not to label as *bidʻat* what people do out of their love for the Prophet.

As for the practice of *ʻurs*, he considered this commendable because it is done to pray to God to bless the departed soul of a holy person from whom people benefitted enormously and received spiritual grace. Moreover, it creates an occasion for the disciples to gather and meet other *shaikh*s and *murīd*s, and such occasions need to have a fixed date.[115] What should be opposed is turning the *ʻurs* into an occasion of merry-making, holding fairs, or celebrating it with pomp and spectacle, since 'visiting graves is meant for reminding, correcting and warning people of the brevity of this life'. Imdādullāh prohibits attending those gatherings 'where objectionable things such as dancing or prostration at graves take place'.[116]

On *samāʻ* his advice is to follow the guidelines laid down by Imām Ghazālī in *Ihyāʼʻulūm* or a *risāla* on *samāʻ* by Qāzī Sanāullāh Pānipatī. Although he himself did not get to attend such assemblies, Imdādullāh does not object to the people of ecstasy (*ahl-i-hāl*) doing so, provided that the ecstasy is not pretended. He recommends those who do not favour *samāʻ* to respect those who do and to view them as *ahl-i-muhabbat* (people of love). Instead of criticizing one another, Muslims should try to stop the excesses among the common Muslims through a kind of flexibility and leniency (*lutf-o-narmī*),[117] he advises, citing the Qur'ānic verse 'Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching' (Qur'ān, 16:125) in support. On the controversies over *imkān-i-nazīr* and *imkān-i-kazb*, Imdādullāh urged the *ʻulamā* not to have public arguments over them, but discuss them through letters. Even if someone wants to put forward his views it should be done in Arabic so that the common Muslims do not become distracted by issues that have no relevance to their daily life.[118]

(p.234) In sum, while Hājī Imdādullāh did manage to attract *ʻulamā* from different parts of the subcontinent, he also remained true to the Chishtī-Sābrī traditions of his ancestors and became a respected spiritual guide. He stood for a moderate reform of Sūfī rituals and devotional practices and urged both Sūfīs and *ʻulamā* to build a common platform, to minimize differences, and to work together for the benefit of the Muslim communities in the subcontinent, instead of dividing them into competing factions.

Methods of Spiritual Training under Hājī Imdādullāh

Hājī Imdādullāh developed an elaborate programme for the training of his disciples. To him, *tasawwuf* meant a three-stage development of an individual. The first stage is *ʻilm* (knowledge), which opens the heart of a student, the second stage is *ʻamal* (action), which helps him move towards his ultimate aim,

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and the final stage is *bakhshish* (grant), which is a gift from God to encourage one's endeavour. Accordingly, the *ahl-i-tasawwuf* (practitioners of *tasawwuf*) are at one of the three levels—*murīd*, one at the beginning of the journey, *mutawassit*, one in the middle of the journey, and *muntahā*, one who has reached his destination in *sulūk*.[119] A *sālik* should first enquire about the truths and qualities of *tasawwuf*, strive to understand its external and internal manners, and learn the terminologies relating to different states and stages (*hāl-o-maqām*). For this purpose he recommended to his disciples *Ādāb-ul-murīdīn*—a classical work by Shaikh Abū Najīb Suhrawardī.[120]

Like other Sūfīs before and after him, Hājī Imdādullāh emphasized strict adherence to the Sharī'at. He believed that the superstructure of mystic experience must be based on the Sharī'at and Sunnat of the Prophet. He disagreed with those Naqshbandīs who claimed superiority over other spiritual orders for following the Sharī'at more religiously than them. Imdādullāh argued that no pious person has ever achieved **(p.235)** *'irfān* (knowledge of God) without following the Sharī'at.[121] In the same way that some earlier reformist Sūfīs had suggested an interconnection between Sharī'at and *tarīqat*, Imdādullāh also believed that while assent with the tongue indicates Sharī'at, the confirmation of the heart means *tarīqat*, and therefore one is useless without the other.[122] He gave due importance to *'ulūm-i-zāhirī* for Sūfīs just as he had emphasized *'ulūm-i-bātinī* for *'ulamā*. He instructed his disciples:

> In the present times, it is incumbent on a person to first study the important regulations of *ahl-i-sunnat wa jamā'at* and memorise the issues relating to obligatory forms of worship such as fasting, prayer, etc. He should then look for a dervish who is a follower of *kitāb-o-sunnat*, knows the correct tenets of *ahl-i-sunnat wa jamā'at*, has a continuous spiritual lineage, has studied under a perfect master of *tasawwuf*, and benefited from divine grace. One needs to find such a master and learn the methods of *zikr* from him. He should also regularly consult books such as *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, *Kīmiya sādat* of Imām Ghazālī, etc.[123]

Once a student finds a master who meets the above criteria, he should enroll as a disciple through the process of *bai'at* or initiatory oath. In *Ziā-ul-qulūb*, he explains how this should be done. The student should take an oath on the hands of his master, saying:

> I absolve all connections from those religions which practice *kufr* and *shirk* and confirm my faith and belief in God and His true Prophet and make Islam my *dastūr-ul-'amal* [code of conduct] and solemnly repent from my earlier sins and take an oath promising to abstain from them. Merely for the pleasure of the Almighty, I promise to forego the attraction of this world [*duniā*].[124]

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Hājī Imdādullāh summarizes the role of a perfect *pīr* in this way:

> To teach the *murīd* about forms of *zikr* according to his capability and also instruct him in the rules and manners of *tarīqat*. He should also be kind and **(p.236)** helpful towards his disciples and make them understand that there will be no success in this path until they follow the injunctions of the Sharī'at. To achieve the objectives, punctilious following of the Sharī'at rules is a must. A *pīr* should also reform the religious tenets of his disciples and inform them that any intuition contrary to the Sharī'at should not be relied upon. Also, [the disciple] should be told that he must abstain from forbidden things and from mortal sins. He should be reminded repeatedly that the rules of Sharī'at are over and above all mystic practices so that no practice should violate [any of] them.[125]

Imdādullāh's training programme emphasizes four points. Firstly, as just noted, meticulous adherence to Islamic Law, the touchstone by which every intuition and mystic experience must be judged. Secondly, purification of the heart, the first and foremost step on the path of *sulūk*.[126] Thirdly, *zikr* (remembrance of God) and *murāqaba* (contemplation). *Zikr* is of two kinds: that which can be done without a guide, such as recitation of the Qur'ān or *darūd* (supplications for the Prophet), and so forth; and that type of *zikr* which is commended and observed by the spiritual guide who is able to assess its effects. Lastly, the ultimate aim of the rituals is a holistic transformation of the self (*nafs*) which leads to a 'voluntary death' before one's 'involuntary death'; that is, the experience that 'you have died before your actual death'. The practice of *zikr* in Hājī Imdādullāh's rituals takes the form of external sensory deprivation, breath control (*nafī-o-asbāt*), control of blood circulation, control of thoughts and imaginings, and limitations on the use of speech. The goal is a bodily re-alignment that would eventually mimic a 'voluntary death'.[127]

Hājī Imdādullāh laid down three ways in which the heart of a disciple can be purified.[128] But it is the third path that Imdādullāh most emphasized, and called it 'the Shattārī Way', which is dedicated to realize the death of the *nafs* (self) before its inevitable, involuntary death. This **(p.237)** path involves constant *zikr* and complete indifference to the occurrence of *karāmāt* (supernatural experiences or 'miracles'). This he believed to be the quickest way to the destination of a disciple.[129] In the Shattārī Way, Imdādullāh laid down ten objective measures that may lead the diligent seeker to success:

> First: repentance [*tauba*], such that you should seek no object other than God, as if the time of death is constantly present. Second: renunciation [*zuhd*], such that you hold no relation of dependence on the world and all that is in it, as if the time of death is constantly present. Third: complete trust [*tawakkul*], such that you take leave of all planned means of livelihood, as you will leave them at the time of death. Fourth: contentment

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> [*qanā'at*], such that you leave all passionate stirring and seething, as these will depart from you at the time of death. Fifth: detachment [*'uzlat*], withdrawal from other people and severance of any need from them, just as the moment of death severs you [from that]. Sixth: concentration [*tawajjuh*], such that you keep all your attention focused on God and turn all your intent to that single orientation, as it will be [turned] at the moment of death. Seventh: patience [*sabr*], that you put aside all your selfish enjoyments and pleasures, just as the time of death puts you aside. Eighth: consent [*rizā*], such that you refuse to follow your own selfish will and instead consent to what contents God, and stay within the limits [ordained by God] and become bound to the Eternal Decrees, for you will be subject to them at the time of your death. Ninth: remembrance [*zikr*], such that you desist from any remembrance other than the remembrance of God, for you will remember in the time of death. Tenth: contemplation [*murāqaba*], so that you desert all your own assertive will and power, as you will [perforce]at the moment of death.[130]

The Method of *Zikr* in the Rituals of Hājī Imdādullāh

The practice of *zikr* was the keystone in the devotional rituals of Hājī Imdādullāh.[131] He believed that while doing *zikr* one must strive for a **(p.238)** spiritual state where he forgets everything except God. The practitioner should become so engrossed in the remembrance of God that he becomes unaware of his own self.[132] In the mystical discipline of Imdādullāh, *zikr* was classified into following types: by the tongue (*zikr-i-jismī*), by concentration (*zikr-i-nafsī*), by the heart (*zikr-i-qalbī*), of the soul (*zikr-i-rūhī*), and by the innermost (*sir*: secret, *zikr-i-sirrī*), which is the highest form of *zikr*.[133] At that stage the practitioner may experience either manifestations of God (*tajalliāt-i-ilāhī*), or experience death of the self, or get intuitions (*ilhām*) in the form of *sultān-i-zikr*, or different forms of light (*nūr*).[134] Following the precepts of his Chishtī masters, Imdādullāh did not recommend *sair-i-asmā'* (*zikr* of a particular Divine Name). He believed that if one becomes too engrossed in, for instance, *Ism-i-Hādī* ('al-Hādī' is one of the Ninety-Nine Names and means 'the Guide'), he may suffer pretentions to being Mahdī. He therefore permitted only three forms of *sair*: *sair-ila-Allāh, sair fi-Allāh*, and *sair min-Allāh*, since he believed that only these have been permitted in the Chishtī tradition.[135]

The Chishtī-Sābrīs were known for their ability to appropriate and reformulate yogic terms and exercises. They had successfully combined the Khurāsānī tradition of imagining the heart as the centre of spiritual anatomy with the yogic traditions of breath control.[136] Imdādullāh continued these traditions. In his account of *zikr*, he followed the basic psychology of the six subtle centres (*latā'if-i-sitta*), derived from the fourteenth century Kubrāwī master 'Alā-ud-daula Simnānī.[137] He modified this psychology with a characteristic stress on breath control developed by two South Asian Sūfī masters: 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī and Muhammad Ghaus Shattārī.[138] One can see in his explanation of *zikr* the

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influence of **(p.239)** the synthetic works on spiritual practice of the eighteenth century, such as Nizām-ud-dīn Aurangābādī's *Nizām-ul-qulūb*. The particular form of *zikr* called *sultān-i-zikr*, well known to 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī in the sixteenth century, has also been explained by Imdadullah in *Ziā'-ul-qulūb* in both the Chishtī and Qādirī practices of it.[139]

The method of *zikr* commended by Imdādullāh is one example of the combination of bodily control and ritual actions. For instance, in his description of a type of *zikr* called *bārah tasbīh,* he lays particular stress on the practice of inhaling and exhaling. As set out in *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*, the practitioner, after offering the *tahajjud* prayers,

> Should raise his hands with humility and submission before God and recite three or five or seven times: 'O God, purify my heart and illumine it with *irfān*.' He should then seek forgiveness twenty-one times and send salutations to the Prophet. Thereafter, he should sit down cross-legged and with the toes and fingers of his right foot compress the *kimās* artery [behind the left knee] and should place both his hands on his knees and face the *qibla*. He should say 'no god' [*lā-ilāh*] and raise the index finger of his right hand and while saying 'except God' [*illa Allāh*] should lower it. He should remain calm and with pure intention continue to ask forgiveness and recite the formula of faith [*lā-ilāha illa Allāh Muhammad-ur-rasūl Allāh*] thrice and the *kalimah-i-shahāda* once. He should bow his head to the extent that his forehead comes close to his left knee. While saying 'no god', he should bring it closer to the right knee. Then in a single breath and in three rhythmic blows, he should bow his head towards the stomach imagining that he has left behind everything other than God. Then, on releasing his breath, he should direct the rhythm of 'except God' [*illa Allāh*] to his heart with full force and imagine that his heart is fully submerged in the love of God [*ishq-i-ilāhī*].[140]

In his presentation of devotional rituals, Imdādullāh aimed to unite various Sūfī lineages and their distinct techniques. He regretted that the various modes and behaviours of the Path had become innumerable by his own generation, and stressed the common core of devotional exercises from various sources. His *Ziā'-ul-qulūb* thus broadly defines contemplation and remembrance (*zikr*) in order to show the unifying core within the diverse forms of devotion. A major point on which his description of these practices differs from his predecessors is their ultimate objective. **(p.240)** He explains the final stage and ultimate effect of the devotional practice of *zikr* in this way:

> Upon reaching this state [that is, *sirr*, the level of inner heart], the seeker will be totally engulfed in the recollection and remembrance. After this he should become so far absorbed in the recitation of *hu hu* that the Recollected becomes the very self. This is the meaning of *fanā dar fanā*

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> [annihilation within annihilation]. Once he reaches this level, he would be completely illuminated from head to toe and would attain the high status of 'he sees through Me and he hears through Me'. At this stage the true relationship between the state of being in servanthood [*'abdiyat*] and the state of being worshipped [*ma'budiyat*] will be unveiled. […] After this the practitioner should become occupied with worship as it deserves to be done, and he should properly preserve the dignity and commandments of the Sharī'at. He then needs to occupy the seat of guidance and lead the way for other seekers of God. In such a condition his *wilāyāt* and *mashaikhat* will stay thorough and effective.[141]

Imdādullāh warns his disciples that during *zikr* certain experiences can at times be misleading and if one starts to relish a particular passing state (*hāl*) and forgets the ultimate objective, it may lead to unbelief. The ultimate objectives, according to him, were two: first, to reach a stage where one can perform an effortless *zikr* by internalizing the formula of 'There is no god but God'. Second, to remain within the injunctions of the Sharī'at one must, after reaching the stage of *fanā*, return to the social world intact. Here, as Scott Kugle has discussed, Imdādullāh goes a step further than his previous Sūfī masters of the Chishtī order. The previous goal of devotion, that is, unification with the Divine, has in Imdādullāh's programme become sublimated into a more 'refined' goal: service to the community on behalf of the absorbed and permeating Divine.[142] By thus stressing upholding of the Sharī'at, and claiming that as the ultimate aim of these rituals, Imdādullāh tried making such devotional practices acceptable to the *'ulamā*. It shows a remarkable ability to mould these rituals to suit the social conditions around him. The most efficacious way of doing this was to adopt the techniques of the past masters of Chishtī and Shattārī lineages and moderate them through emphasis on the **(p.241)** Sharī'at, away from the more extreme athletic-ascetic qualities while still preserving the bodily rigour associated with them.[143] While his spiritual ancestors thought of ecstasy as a sufficient justification for such practices, Imdādullāh points out the importance of being oriented to the Sunnat and Sharī'at even when undergoing these exercises.

In the programme that he envisioned for the training of his disciples, there are many elements of continuity from the traditional and glorified past of the Chishtī-Sābrī order, but there are also subtle points which indicate that Imdādullāh was in fact engaging with the changes happening in his time. At a historical juncture, when religious scholars were emphasizing the centrality of the Sharī'at and the need to rigorously uphold the legal injunctions of the Qur'ān, Imdādullāh was able to connect Sūfī practices and rituals to such discourses. Most of his writings repeatedly turn to the topic of self-transformation and internalization of Islamic rituals, an emphasis that promotes a variant of society-oriented ethics acceptable to the *'ulamā*. The successful seeker on this path would not just be an exemplar of virtue, but a self-

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transformed individual whose heart remains inwardly devoted to God, while externally he may attend to the social needs around him. Even though Imdādullāh was respectful of his spiritual ancestors and faithfully transmitted the details of their practices, he was also responsive to the religious and political concerns of contemporary society.

Notes:

([1]) The *khilāfat-i-zāhirī* entailed a *khalīfah-i-zāhir* to take charge of political matters and govern according to the Prophetic model. For more on this concept, see F. A. Nizami, 'Madrasahs, Scholars and Saints: Muslim Response to the British Presence in Delhi and the Upper Doab, 1803–1857', Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, (1983), p. 144.

([2]) Robert Rozehnal, *Islamic Sufism Unbound: Politics and Piety in Twenty-First Century Pakistan* (New York, 2007), pp. 176–84.

([3]) Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah* (Multan, AH 1405), p. 108; Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Karāmāt-i-imdādiyah* (Kanpur, AH 1321), p. 44

([4]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah,* p. 9; Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisār Ahmad Fāruqi (Delhi, 1981), p. 8.

([5]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 89; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 124.

([6]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 14; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 14.

([7]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 15–16; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 17, 24, 160.

([8]) *Sahīh Bukhārī*, (English transl.) Muhammad Muhsin Khān (Maktab al-Riyaz-ul-Hadis, 1981), vol. 5, Book 57, Hadis nos. 2 and 3.

([9]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 70; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 11, 91, 110.

([10]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, the editor's 'Introduction', p. 12.

([11]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 186; Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, (ed.) Zuhur-ul Hasan (Deoband, n.d.), p. 208.

([12]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 15.

([13]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 91; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 127–8.

([14]) Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, *Kamālāt-i-imdādiyah* (Shahkot, n.d.), p. 44.

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([15]) When an *ālim* was asked how the teaching of the *Masnavī* by Hājī Imdādullāh differed from others, he replied: 'The difference between an *ālim*'s teaching of the *Masnavī* and the way Hājī Sāhib teaches is: if you imagine a beautiful house and a person takes you to the door and explains to you in detail everything that is there in the house, without actually taking you inside. But Hājī Sāhib is like a person who would not explain much but instead he takes you inside this house to a position from where you can admire the things yourself.' Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 206.

([16]) Hājī Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Zuhur-ul-Hasan (Thanabhawan, n.d.).

([17]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 27–8.

([18]) Hājī Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (Delhi, 1979), letter nos. 10, 12, 47; Hājī Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, (ed.) Nasim Ahmad Alavi (Jhinjhana, 1978), letter no. 16.

([19]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 11; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi, p. 11.

([20]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter no. 7.

([21]) Hājī Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Waqar Ali bin Mukhtar Ali (Deoband, n.d.), pp. 93–4.

([22]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 100; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 140.

([23]) Hāfiz Qārī Fuyūzul Rahmān has given an account of sixty-seven *khalīfah*s in different regions of India (including Mysore, Bombay, and Hyderabad in the Deccan and Ghazni in the north-west): Hāfiz Qārī Fuyūzul Rahmān, *Hazrat Hājī Imdādullāh muhājir makkī aur unke khulafā* (Karachi, 1984); see also Maulānā Imdād Sābrī, *Hājī Imdādullāh aur unke khulafā* (Delhi, n.d.). To this list some more names have been added by Nisar Ahmad Faruqi in his 'Introduction' to *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 111–16.

([24]) In a letter to Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, Imdādullāh mentions that Sufis from Arabia and Syria are awaiting the Arabic translation of the work: Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Zuhur-ul-Hasan (Thanabhawan, n.d.).

([25]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 18, 86, 107; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 123–4, 137, 140, 144, 150–1.

([26]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 160.

([27]) Hājī Imdādullāh followed the precedent set by his *murshid* Miānjī Nūr Muhammad, who had advised a disciple to leave his job and dedicate himself to

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giving *hidāyat* to God's creatures (*khalq-i-khudā*): Nasrullāh Khān Khweshgī, *Bayāz-i-dilkushā*, p. 152.

([28]) Following the advice, Ahmad 'Alī started teaching in Saharanpur on his return and became a prominent figure at Mazāhirul 'ulūm: Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 106; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 148–9.

([29]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 5, pp. 13–14.

([30]) Maulānā Manāzir Ahsan Gilānī, *Sawānih Qāsmī* (Deoband, n.d), vol. 2, pp. 224–5.

([31]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 105.

([32]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 18, pp. 43–50.

([33]) Cited in Basīr Ahmad, *Tazkirah Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī* (Delhi, 2005), p. 53.

([34]) Cited in Ahmad, *Tazkirah Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī*, p. 54.

([35]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 38, pp. 77–8.

([36]) Cited in Ahmad, *Tazkirah Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī*, p. 154.

([37]) Cited in Latīfullāh, *Anfās-i-imdādiyah* (Karachi, 1995), p. 128.

([38]) The seven were Maulānā Muhammad Husain, Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpurī, Nūr Muhammad Punjābī, Ahmad Hasan Kānpurī, Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan, and Shāh Sulaimān Phulwārwī.

([39]) Cited in Latīfullāh, *Anfās-i-imdādiyah*, p. 128.

([40]) Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (Delhi, 1996), letter no. 27, pp. 178–9.

([41]) Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, letter nos. 12, 39, 40, 41, among others; Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter nos. 50, 52, 62, among others. Even in his old age when he was unable to write, he dictated letters to his *murīd* Maulvī Munawwar 'Alī in Mecca.

([42]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter nos. 10, 11, 15, 18, 33.

([43]) For instance, Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter nos. 1, 2, 6, 22, 55, among others.

([44]) For example, certain incantations (*'amal*s) are suggested in *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter nos. 6, 20, 31, 44, 59.

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([45]) For instance, in a letter addressed to Maulānā Qāsim and Muhammad Ya'qūb Nānautawī, he informs them about Hafīz 'Abdul Rahmān Rājpurī, who could not be taught *pās-i-anfās* (a ritual of *zikr* with controlled breathing) and other *wazīfah*s and that they should teach him *do-āzdah tasbīh* (an exercise comprising *zikr*): Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 13. See also letter nos. 18, 24, 26, 61.

([46]) Similarly, he asked for a printed copy of *du'ā-i-mughnī* which he said was in great demand in the Hijaz: Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter nos. 18, 22, 23, 28, 47.

([47]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 196.

([48]) Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 29, pp. 186–8.

([49]) Among those whose signatures appear on the work include Muftī Lutfullāh 'Alīgarhī (d. 1916), Maulānā Faiz-ul-Hasan Sahāranpurī (d. 1887), Maulānā Ghulām Qasūrī (d. 1898), Maulānā Irshād Husain Rāmpurī (d. 1893), Maulānā Ahmad Razā Khān Barelwī (d. 1921), Maulānā 'Abdul Qādir Badāunī (d. 1901), Maulānā Wakīl Ahmad Sikandarpurī (d. 1904), Maulānā Muhammad Fārūq Chirayyākotī (d. 1908), Maulānā 'Abdul Haq Haqqānī (d. 1917). At the end of the work, there are attestations from Hājī Imdādullāh and Maulānā Rahmatullāh Kairānwī. A rebuttal of the rejoinder, titled *al-Barāhīn-i-qāti'ah*, was written in 1886 by the Deobandī *'ulamā*. For details, see Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, 'Introduction', pp. 11–12.

([50]) Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 22, pp. 160–2.

([51]) 'Abdul Samī', *Anwār-i-sāti'ah* (Delhi, AH 1323), pp. 324–5.

([52]) For instance, see Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 3, p. 74; letter no. 16, pp. 134–6.

([53]) Imdādullāh, *Nawādir-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 10, pp. 100–4.

([54]) Most of these works are collected in Imdādullāh, *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*.

([55]) The *masnavī* seems to have become quickly popular among dervishes and Sufis: Hājī Imdādullāh mentions that he met people reading it in a market in Delhi and on the route to Panipat. Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 83.

([56]) Imdādullāh, 'Risāla Dard nāmah-i-ghamnāk', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 305–38.

([57]) Imdādullāh, 'Ghizā-i-rūh', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 219–304. See also Lutfullāh Badawī, 'Masnavī ghizā-i-rūh', *al-Rahīm* 3, pp. 348–60, no. 5–6 (1956).

([58]) Imdādullāh, 'Jihād-i-akbar', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 349–84.

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([59]) Imdādullāh, ‘Masnavī Tuhfat-ul-ushāq’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 151–2.

([60]) Imdādullāh, ‘Masnavī Tuhfat-ul-ushāq’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 141–206.

([61]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 87.

([62]) A manuscript copy of this work, in the collection of Nisār Ahmad Fārūqī, was written out in 1876 by Muhammad ‘Abdul ‘Azīz Amrohwī. Imdādullāh, ‘Ziā’-ul-qulūb’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 3.

([63]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 45.

([64]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, (ed.) Zuhur-ul-Hasan. (Thanabhawan, n.d.), letter no. 8; Muhammad Fārūqī, *Sawānih hayāt Shāh Muhammad Husain Ilāhābādī* (Allahabad, nd.), pp. 116–17.

([65]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 43.

([66]) Qudratullāh Shahāb, *Shahāb namah* (Lahore, 1987), p. 1001.

([67]) Scott Kugle, ‘The Heart of Ritual is the Body: Anatomy of an Islamic Devotional Manual of the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003), p. 42.

([68]) Imdādullāh, ‘Ziā’-ul-qulūb’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 6.

([69]) He has explained the methods of performing *bārah tasbīh*, *zikr nafī-wa-asbāt*, *zikr asbāt-i-mujarrid*, *zikr ism-i-zāt*, *zikr pās-i-anfās*, *zikr ism-i-zāt ma‘ zarb*, *zikr ism-i-zāt Qalandarī*, *zikr-i-jārob*, *zikr-i-haddādī*, *zikr-i-arrah*, *zikr habs-i-dam*, *zikr-i-sarmadī*, and so forth, to be performed in Chishtī order: Imdādullāh, ‘Ziā’-ul-qulūb’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 12–24.

([70]) Imdādullāh, ‘Irshād-i-murshid’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 117–40.

([71]) Imdādullāh, ‘Risāla dar bayān wahdat-ul-wujūd’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 207–17.

([72]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter no. 7, p. 17.

([73]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter no. 7, p. 17.

([74]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter no. 7, p. 17.

([75]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 18, 160; Also cited in Sanā-ul-Haq, ‘Hazrat Maulānā Shaikh Muhammad Thānwī’, in *Sawānih ‘ulamā-i-deoband*, (ed.) Nawaz Deobandi (Deoband, 2000), pp. 275–7.

([76]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-hidāyat*, letter no. 16, p. 45.

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([77]) Imdādullāh, ‘Faisla haft mas’la’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 100–101.

([78]) Imdādullāh, ‘Gulzār-i-ma‘rifat’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 305–38.

([79]) Imdādullāh, ‘Nālā-i-Imdād Gharīb’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 386–97.

([80]) Imdādullāh, *Marqūmāt-i-imdādiyah*, letter no. 16, pp. 38–40.

([81]) Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, *Makātīb-i-rashīdiyah*, (ed.) ‘Āshiq Ilāhī Merathī (Saharanpur, n.d.), p. 9.

([82]) Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 9.

([83]) The first volume came out in 1897, the second in 1899, and third in 1903: Imdādullāh, *Maktūbāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 38.

([84]) In ‘Ghizā-i-rūh’ in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 233, he writes:

راز باطن اس سے کب تجھ پر کھلے علم رسمی گر تو کیسا ہی پڑھے

([85]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 56–7.

([86]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 56.

([87]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 57; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 69.

([88]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 116. In one poetic composition titled ‘Ghizā-i-rūh’, there is an entire *munājāt* for his *murshid*, after the customary praise of God, the Prophet, and the first four Caliphs: Imdādullāh, ‘Ghizā-i-rūh’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 221–5.

سر سے پا تک مصدر انوار حق ہیں وہ بے شک مظہر انوار حق

جس سے ہے پر نور یہ ہر دو سرا دیکھ ٹک ذرا جلوہ اس نور کا

ہر جگہ نور محمد جلوہ گر دیکھ لے ہے چشم دل کی کھول کر

سایہء نور محمد میں تو آ چاہیےء تجھکو اگر وصل خدا

([89]) Thānwī, *Shamā’im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 31–9; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 41; Imdādullāh, ‘Risāla dar bayān wahdat-ul-wujūd’, in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah* pp. 208–17.

([90]) For instance, Imdādullāh, ‘Nālā-i-Imdād Gharīb’ in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 386.

چمکتا ہے جلوہ قمردار تیرا بہر رنگ ہر شےء میں ہر جا پہ دیکھو

کہ جس جا نہیں ذکراذکار تیرا نہیں وہ جگہ اور نہیں وہ مکاں ہے

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تجھے دیکھتا ہوں نہ اغیار تیرا نظر کو اٹھاکر جدھر دیکھتا ہوں

([91]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 64; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 54.

([92]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, 'Introduction', p. 31.

([93]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 134–5.

([94]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 89, 113–14.

([95]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 99; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 138–9.

([96]) His *malfūzāt* narrate a miraculous event that he experienced while meditating for three days at the shrine of Qutb-ud-dīn Bakhtiyār Kākī in Delhi: Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 26, 139–40; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 17.

([97]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 118.

([98]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 40; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 29–30.

([99]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 71–2; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 58–9.

([100]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 105; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 77.

([101]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 119; Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 85.

([102]) Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, pp. 194–5.

([103]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 55.

([104]) Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 208; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 163. When someone complained to him that a person on hajj kept staring at the *Kaaba* instead of praying, he replied, 'God knows what state of heart the man had been given': Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, 'Introduction', p. 37.

([105]) When a person came to be initiated as a disciple on the condition that he would not give up listening to music or other such habits, Imdādullāh accepted his conditions but asked him to follow one practice punctually and religiously—namely to give up whatever he was doing when he heard the call to prayer (*āzān*) and to offer his prayers first: Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 200. Similarly, when a *ghair-muqallid* came to him asking for *bai'at*, Imdādullāh accepted him and asked him to read selected portions of *Hizb-ul-bahr* (a prayer book) and leave those sections that he did not (yet) agree with: Thānwī, *Arwāh-i-salāsah*, p. 201.

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([106]) Cited in Maulānā Muhammad Zakariyā, *Tārīkh-i-mashā'ikh-i-chisht* (Karachi, 1976–7), p. 197.

([107]) Thānwī, *Kamālāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 40.

([108]) Consensus literature was a long-standing Ottoman tradition; see Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015), p. 229.

([109]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 99–115.

([110]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 101.

([111]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 102–3.

([112]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la' in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 102–3.

([113]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 50.

([114]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 105–6.

([115]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 109.

([116]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 110.

([117]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 110–11.

([118]) Imdādullāh, 'Faisla haft mas'la', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 114–15.

([119]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 28–9; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 38–9.

([120]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 30; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 40. Hājī Imdādullāh asked Maulānā Rahmatullāh Kairānwī to do a translation of *Ādāb-ul-murīdīn*, which was printed by the Matba'-i-Hāshmī at Meerut: Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, 'Introduction', p. 39.

([121]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 64; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 82.

([122]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, p. 42; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 41.

([123]) Thānwī, *Shamā'im-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 26–7; Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 36.

([124]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 8.

([125]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 9.

([126]) This is justified through a Hadis: 'Without doubt there is a piece of flesh in the body and when that is embellished the whole body is [positively] affected and when that [piece] is damaged the whole body will be damaged. That piece of

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flesh is the heart.' *Sahīh Bukhārī*, (English transl.) Muhammad Muhsin Khan, vol. 1, Book 2, Hadis no. 49.

([127]) Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', p. 49.

([128]) Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', p. 254.

([129]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 6.

([130]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 7. I have here amended the translation in Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', p. 49.

([131]) Hājī Imdādullāh himself was fond of *zikr* and claimed to have reached a stage where he could do recollection of the Name of God 250 times in one breath: Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 63. He also expressed the wish that, at his funeral, *zikr-i-jahr* or loud recollection be performed: Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, p. 204.

([132]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 12–13.

([133]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 13, 41.

([134]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 29.

([135]) Thānwī, *Imdād-ul-mushtāq*, pp. 143–4.

([136]) Scott Kugle, *Sufis & Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality & Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill, 2007), p. 240.

([137]) These are: heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūh*), soul (*nafs*), the secret (*sirr*), hidden (*khafī*), and most hidden (*akhfa*). Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 132.

([138]) For more on the practice of *zikr* see Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', and Kugle, *Sufis & Saints' Bodies*, ch. 5. See also Carl Ernst and Bruce Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York, 2002), pp. 130–3.

([139]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 30–1.

([140]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, p. 14.

([141]) Imdādullāh, 'Ziā'-ul-qulūb', in *Kulliyāt-i-imdādiyah*, pp. 18–19.

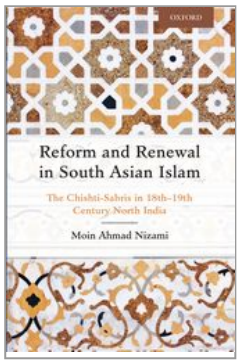
([142]) For details, see Kugle, *Sufis & Saints' Bodies*, ch. 5; and Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', p. 51.

([143]) Kugle, *Sufis & Saints' Bodies*, p. 256.

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Reform and Renewal in South Asian Islam: The Chishti-Sabris in 18th—19th Century North India
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Conclusion

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Abstract and Keywords

The Conclusion sums up the main arguments of the work. It reiterates the process of gradual transformation in the Chishti-Sabri traditions as the order shifted from Awadh to upper Doab and established connections with the Waliullahi scholars in Delhi. It summarises the different responses which Sufi institutions offered towards the revivalist upsurge in the eighteenth century and explains how the reactions of the Chishti-Sabris offer an interesting case of study. It also sums up the debate on 'neo-Sufism' from the Indian context and points towards a reformulation of the mystical heritage while utilising the terminologies of classical Sufi authors and particularly of Ibn Arabi. It stresses the need to re-look at the Sufi-alim interaction in colonial period to highlight a more conciliatory attitude between the two.

Keywords: Chishti-Sabri, 'neo-Sufism', Sufi-alim connections, Haji Imdadullah, Deoband, Tariqa-i-Muhammadia

The historical development of the Chishtī-Sābrī order can be roughly divided into four stages which serve as a convenient framework for understanding the trajectories in the order's social roles and spiritual teachings. The first stage comprised the earliest three generations of Sābrī *shaikh*s (*ca.* thirteenth–fourteenth century), about whom no historically reliable information is available. The much later accounts are unanimous in portraying these founding figures as awe-inspiring (*jalālī*), given to mystical ecstasy (*sukr*), self-confined to rural locales, and aloof from the general populace. These characteristics no doubt

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enhanced their authority among devotees who revered them and would be loath to do anything against their wishes.

The second stage, more significant for the formation of distinctively Sābrī traditions, covers the period when the order was most popular in Awadh and the surrounding area. The culturally assimilative environment of medieval Awadh (as noted in the writings of Muzaffar Alam, Simon Digby, and others) influenced the early traditions of the Chishtī-Sābrī order. The heavy prevalence in the region of the theosophical **(p.243)** speculations of Ibn ʻArabī, the frequent Sūfī–Bhaktī interaction—both in a spirit of conflict and accommodation—interest in Vedantic philosophy, and the absence there of any influential propagandist of the school of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī, made the Chishtī-Sābrī leaders strong advocates of cultural assimilation. To achieve it they used *wujūdī* ideas to strengthen their social alignments and to build ideological bridges with the higher Hindu thought. To the same end, they often used local dialects in their poetry. At the same time, their belief in the universality and finality of Islam as a religion, and their commitment to the core Chishtī precepts that emphasized ʻservice to mankind' (*khidmat-i-khalq*) as a religious obligation, sustained their emotional bonds with the common populace. The second stage lasted till the end of the seventeenth century, during which Chishtī-Sābrīs appeared as popular Sūfīs, strong advocates of *samāʻ*, active practitioners of *zikr*, vocal supporters of the doctrine of Ibn ʻArabī, and strenuous performers of spiritual exercises and exertions (*riyāzāt-o-mujāhidāt*).

The century that followed was formative of trends whose influence on the socio-religious fabric of South Asia continues to be felt. Developments in Indo-Muslim mysticism, particularly among the Chishtī and Naqshbandī leadership in Delhi, ultimately contributed to a transformation of the Chishtī-Sābrī order from a pluralist to a reformist one. By altering both the ideological bases and institutional forms of Sufism, these developments changed the perception and understanding of the essence of Sufism. That in turn gave the Sūfī movement the required stimulus to respond to the challenges of colonial modernity. From this time onwards, Sūfīs and *ʻulamā* subscribed to some degree to a common agenda with shared roles in overlapping institutions, both acting more broadly than before as social reformers and spiritual guides. This Sūfī–*ʻālim* rapprochement was, in the view of this study, the most significant development of the period, certainly in terms of its enduring consequence and not only for the Chishtī-Sābrī order. The new, vibrant leadership was able to respond effectively to both the spiritual and material needs of the community it served. The Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s developed close links with the *ʻulamā* and were successful in bringing them into the order. This was indeed a unique response from a medieval Sūfī institution to the questions raised by colonial rule. A Sūfī–*ʻālim* intermingling of this nature and scale is not noticeable in any other Sūfī order; **(p.244)** with the possible exceptions of the Mujaddidī and Mazharī branches of the Naqshbandīs.[1]

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The Chishtī-Sābrī order shifted its focus from Awadh to Upper Doab at around the time when revival and reform movements (*ihyā'-o-tajdīd*) were influencing Muslim religious leaders in and around Delhi. Old patterns were reshaped as these movements looked for indigenous precedents for appropriate reform. Though in part prompted by a chain of events resulting from Western colonial expansion, the changes themselves were rooted in Islamic history and tradition. As Barbara Metcalf has put it, religious change in this period primarily entailed self-conscious reassessment of what was religiously authentic.[2] The ways in which Hājī Imdādullāh remodelled Chishtī-Sābrī devotional rituals in the nineteenth century is a striking example of how Muslim religious leaders moulded their spiritual traditions to make them effective in abruptly changed situations. The leadership of the order remained loyal to the cornerstones of the Chishtī worldview as handed down from its earliest masters, and in continuing to draw upon their spiritual resources, the new leaders consciously acted as preservers of Chishtī traditions in their changed setting.

The shift from Awadh to Upper Doab marks the beginning of the third stage in the history of the Chishtī-Sābrī order. Early in the eighteenth century, the spiritual successors of Shāh Muhammadī Fayyāz (a *khalīfah* of Shāh Muhibbullāh) settled in Amroha and laid the foundation of the Khānqāh-i-Hādwia, which would become a major centre for the order's expansion in the region. This shift in the order's primary locus of activity was significant: it brought the Sābrī leaders into close contact with the Naqshbandīs and reformist Walīullāhī *'ulamā* and provided a different socio-religious environment for the order to develop in. These contacts were formed and later reinforced through the creation of extensive networks between the *qasbah*s and the capital. In exploring the lived experience of the Sābrīs at Amroha, one notes elements of both change from and continuity with earlier stages. Thus, while the earlier Sābrīs **(p.245)** were known to have sought ecstasy and intoxication, the latter Sābrīs increasingly appear to lead lives of sobriety in deliberate observance of the boundaries of religious law. Also, involving disciples in controversial issues (such as *wahdat-ul-wujūd*), was strongly discouraged—an attitude reminiscent of the reformist Sūfī masters of Delhi. There was also a marked decline in interest in Hindu Vedantic philosophy—Shāh 'Azd-ud-dīn's *Maqāsid-ul-'ārifīn* is the last major work by a Sābrī *shaikh* to refer to Hindu cosmogony. These developments can be understood in terms of the growing influence of the Naqshbandī order in the region, the first signs of which are noticeable during this period. However, the Sābrīs at Amroha continued the familiar Chishtī devotional practices of *samā'*, *zikr*, and other rituals and remained supporters of *wujūdī* ideas. They operated at a popular level, responsive to the needs of a rural population: their concern for the unlettered among their Muslim and non-Muslim disciples, with whom they conversed in local Hindawi dialect, is indicated by the kind of issues to which they responded. The *malfūzāt* of Shāh Hādī often include his Hindawi *dohā*s and *kabad*s, a substitute for his Hindu devotees for *wazīfah*s and *'amal*s.

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To begin with, the contacts between the Sābrī establishment (in Amroha) and the Walīullāhī scholars did not have much impact on the intellectual basis of the order or on the concept and role of a Sūfī *shaikh*. Early contacts were limited to a few scholarly visits and exchange of students. The Sābrī *shaikh*s continued to operate at a more or less popular level. However, as these contacts became more common and frequent, important changes began to take root in their thinking and the orientation of their service to their community.

Saiyid Ahmad's Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia, a revivalist and activist movement among north Indian Muslim intelligentsia, had a significant impact on the Chishtī-Sābrī leadership. It reinforced the intricate, complex connections formed between Sūfīs and *'ulamā* across the different *qasbah*s through teacher–disciple networks and the grant of *sanad*s and *khilāfat*s. Many leading Sūfī-scholars of the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab, and particularly of the towns of Kandhla, Thanabhawan, Nanauta, and Gangoh, among others, were drawn to the Muhammadia movement. Influenced by these networks, the Chishtī-Sābrī order developed an elegant synthesis of the thought of various Sūfī *shaikh*s of both Chishtī and Naqshbandī lineages. They retained their connection with their spiritual ancestors and predecessors, while refining and adapting their intellectual principles and practices to accommodate Walīullahī influences. In the record of their life and **(p.246)** teachings, we can discern the Walīullahī trends of the previous century—namely, close networking between Sūfī and *'ālim* traditions; emphasis on the external requirements of the religion; balancing 'this-worldly' and 'other-worldly' Islam; concern to guide Muslims in the conduct of their everyday lives; working for *ittihād* through a flexible, mutually tolerant approach to philosophical and spiritual controversies; multiple initiations in different *silsilah*s; and so on. These features become much more pronounced over the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Hājī Imdādullāh. Far from being an order in decline, there is evidence of a resilient, flexible Sūfī leadership actively engaged in the issues confronting north Indian Muslims during the post-1857 period.

By way of the changed orientation of Sūfī concerns, there emerged what Arthur Buehler terms the 'teaching' and 'directing' *shaikh*. The authority of medieval Sābrī *shaikhs* and even those based in Amroha had rested on the *karāmāt* or miracles attributed to them. For their devotees, the *shaikh*s' miracles proved their spiritual status and authority. Shāh 'Abdul Hādī of Amroha tacitly accepted that stories of his *karāmāt* were responsible for people developing faith in him—his *malfūzāt* were compiled with this very objective in mind. His interventions in the ordinary course of nature (*kharq-i-'ādāt*) extended from the mundane affairs of individuals (for whom he supplied amulets) to influence over political events. The second source of authority of early Sābrīs had also rested on their reputation for inaccessibility and a dislike of human society, albeit mitigated by care and concern for disciples and visitors. For the earliest generations of Sābrī *shaikh*s, this worked well—indeed, their disciples competed in portraying their

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masters as wholly in isolation from the public.[3] Performance of extreme spiritual exercises, sometimes linked to yogic practices of a Shamanistic type, and at other times linked to the refined sensibility of Persian poetry and music, enhanced a *shaikh*'s prestige and won the reverent devotion of the local population.

With the emergence of a Chishtī-Sābrī 'directing *shaikh*', there is a shift away from such sources of authority to claims of connection with **(p.247)** the person and legacy of the Prophet Muhammad. Among the 'neo-Sufis', this connection was sought directly through dreams and visions without intermediary. We noted that for Hājī Imdādullāh too, his visions enhanced his authority among the *'ulamā*. Also, Sūfī *shajra*s were used to establish a connection with the earliest generation of Muslims and demonstrate a continuous transmission of spiritual knowledge. Some scholars have suggested that during the nineteenth century familial metaphors were used to describe a disciple's relation to the master, and the personal association with a Sūfī guide was more highly valued than affiliation into a specific lineage.[4] Nevertheless, *shajra*s continued to be bestowed and were even recited and memorized. One of Hājī Imdādullāh's disciples sought his permission to print and distribute a *shajra* among other disciples, which he happily granted. As bestowers of *barakah* (divine blessings), Sūfī *shaikh*s had always been considered close to God and His Prophet, but during the nineteenth century a Sūfī *shaikh* had to be an exemplar of Islamic virtues outwardly and inwardly. By his spiritual wayfaring he had to conform to the inner Sunnat and by his behaviour, to the outer Sunnat of the Prophetic model. A bond (*rābita*) with an exemplar *shaikh* as a source of the flow of divine energy (*faiz*) from the heart of the master to the heart of the disciple dictated the necessity of having a perfect *shaikh*. For Imdādullāh too, this was significant as he considered a spiritual master as *mīzāb-i-rahmat-i-ilāhī* (a vehicle for receiving divine blessing). The different sources of authority—spiritual wayfaring, the Sunnat, lineage, and scholarly religious knowledge—converged in the central figure and authority of the Prophet.

This study has re-marked the interaction between the Sūfīs and the *'ulamā*, often seen as initiators of Islamic reform. Hitherto scholarship has paid relatively little attention to this phenomenon in the Indian context, notably the way in which Sūfī leadership responded to the reformist upsurge in north India. Analysts of Islamic reform have doubtless recognized the great diversity among reformist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—the Deobandīs, Ahl-i-Hadīs, Nadwatul *'ulamā*, **(p.248)** Tablīghī Jamā'at, and other educational modernists. These movements were invariably led by *'ulamā* adhering to diverse strands of thought, so that their reform programmes and strategies were internally contested.

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In India, unrelenting criticism of certain Sūfī rituals came from scholars who themselves are reputed Sūfīs; but the same rituals were solidly defended by those whose teachings are also generally put under the broad label of ‘Sufism’. Scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the fact that many of the reformist institutions set up in the nineteenth century drew significantly on Sūfī traditions. The contributions of Sūfī leaders to the formation of such institutions need to be highlighted in order to give a balanced account of the role of Muslim religious leaders. Barbara Metcalf’s study of Deoband tries to give Sūfīs their due, though she has concentrated on the ‘reformist ‘*ulamā*’ as the chief leaders of Muslims. At times Sūfī and ‘*ālim* have been sharply distinguished, along with the claim that the emergence of revivalist movements tended to diminish (even annul) the popularity of Sufism. It has been assumed that for the reformers, Sufism failed by measure of the ‘orthodox’ rational thinking, and the prevalence of mystical thought in a society was an indicator of its decline. In sum, modern scholarship typically presented Muslim reform movements and Islamic mysticism as traditions poles apart, divergent in their beginning and ends, and it has claimed that the former tended to erode the latter, which soon faded away under the impact of Western culture.

Since reformist Islam shared its constituency with popular (‘customary’) Islam, it could only expand its mass base by employing and appreciating, then negating and criticizing the paradigms of the latter. Most studies on the interaction between Sufism and Islamic reform have focused on Sūfī shrines, invariably seeing them as antipathetic to reform, clinging to customs and practices even in the face of stringent criticisms. Claudia Liebeskind’s study of Sūfī centres concludes that the reformers had no visible impact on customs and rituals of the shrines, which continued more or less their ‘un-reformed’ practices.[5] Besides the three major Sūfī centres of Awadh—Kakori, Salon, and Dewa—in Liebeskind’s work, other centres of popular Sufism, such as the *dargah* of Sālār Mas‘ūd in Bahraich, also appear to have remained practically untouched by the reformist upsurge, which had only a momentary impact at best. Usha Sanyal’s excellent study **(p.249)** of the Barelwī movement (initiated by Ahmad Razā Khān) is another case where Sufism is seen as in opposition to reformist currents.[6] Sanyal remarks that the Barelwīs deployed the methods and idioms of the Qādirī order to criticize reformists, labelling them as ‘Wahhābīs’ or ‘Deobandīs’ and blaming them for belittling the stature of the Prophet. They successfully built their constituency in north India by implying that their movement aimed to restore the Prophet of Islam to the reverence due to him, and they garnered support mainly from the Sūfīs. Barelwīs are seen as Sufism’s most vociferous defenders, who stood for all the manifestations of Muslim customs accrued over the centuries: elaborate ceremonies of *mīlād*, celebrations of ‘*urs*, pilgrimage to shrines, the use of amulets, and regarding the *shaikh* as a sort of mediator between man and God. Yet, like other Islamic movements of the period, they too shared a concern to build a Muslim community, spiritually strengthened and able

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to resist the effects of British rule. However, their methods were different and more in line with medieval pluralist Sūfī traditions.[7]

These studies imply that a reactionary response was the only way Sūfīs reacted to revivalist currents. Looking at developments within the Chishtī-Sābrī order allows a different case of Sūfī–*'ālim* interaction to be presented. As the Sābrī order came into greater contact with the *'ulamā* and the boundaries between the two streams blurred, its leaders in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries generated a reform from within their tradition, changing their concern from spiritual guidance with devotional ecstasy, to a role affected by, and concerned with, historical contingencies—as moral/religious guides, as social reformers, and upholders of a 'doctrinal Sufism'. The emergence of 'doctrinal Sufism' and of a directing and teaching *shaikh* constituted a novel response to the reformist tide. Here we find Sūfī *shaikh*s complementing the process of *tajdīd* instead of retaliating against its demands. As Barbara Metcalf has argued, and as this study amply bears out, there existed much closer and more intricate connections between reformist *'ulamā* and Sūfīs than has generally been supposed. The Sūfī doctrine and discipline of men like Imdādullāh were institutionalized in the Deoband seminary, where Sufism provided both meaning to religious experience and the most intense of personal ties **(p.250)** between teacher and student.[8] Although certain points of difference in the views of Imdādullāh and some of his Deobandī followers did emerge, he considered them insignificant. The reformist *'ulamā* of Deoband were Chishtī in their *sulūk* but they combined all the *silsilah*s. While clearly influenced by Naqshbandī practices, most of their leading *'ulamā* were disciples of Imdādullāh and very much a part of the leadership of the Chishtī-Sābrī order in the late nineteenth century. In fact, the unity of different groups of *'ulamā* was based in large part on the shared spiritual allegiances of each. The Deobandīs were primarily Chishtī; the Barelwīs, Qādirīs; the Nadwā, Naqshbandīs.[9] This study has examined how these relationships were constructed and maintained among the Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s and their *'ulamā* disciples. I have argued that, in this process, Sufism complemented the revivalist upsurge in many respects, rather than opposing it or retaliating against it. Sūfīs were not marginalized by the reformist movements; rather, they played the role of mediators for reform among the wider public.

The closeness between the Sūfī establishments and the *'ulamā* is most clearly seen in the connections between Chishtī-Sābrīs and the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia of Saiyid Ahmad, a movement often considered to stand against Sufism. The Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia has been variously interpreted, and a lot of polemic produced around the issues raised by it. The movement has even been linked to the Wahhābī movement of Arabia, which launched an all-out campaign against Sufism. The key Muhammadia text *Taqwiyat-ul-īmān* has been compared to the *Kitāb-ul-tauhīd* of 'Abdul Wahhāb. Urdu works of Saiyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī and Ghulām Rasūl Mihr have been sympathetic to the movement, but others have denounced it to the extent of denying any elements of religion in it.[10] While

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the political and reformist dimensions of the Muhammadia have attracted the attention of historians, comparatively less attention has been given to its impact on the Sūfī centres of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the presumption has been that it failed to make any significant **(p.251)** impact on the Sūfī institutions of Awadh. However, the *qasbah*s of Upper Doab have a different story to tell. It was in this region that the impact of this movement was decisive and long lasting. It is reported that, when Hakīm Saiyid ʻAbdul Hayy toured the *qasbah*s of north India in 1894, he was told by the local people that Saiyid Ahmad's influence still remained in all the places that he visited.[11]

The movement of Saiyid Ahmad helped to diffuse Walīullāhī traditions in the *qasbah*s and enhanced the interaction between the *khānqāh-madrasah*s of Delhi and neighbouring towns. As a result we see a growing closeness between Walīullāhī *ʻulamā* and the Chishtī-Sābrī *shaikh*s. These networks served to bring about a combination of the role of *ʻulamā* and Sūfīs and increased the respect for *ʻulamā* among the Chishtī-Sābrīs. Evidence from the life of Shāh ʻAbdul Rahīm Fātimī shows that he considered his initiation from Saiyid Ahmad as a source of his salvation. For many nineteenth-century Muslim leaders including Hājī Imdādullāh, the person of Saiyid Ahmad remained central. Thus, while the Tarīqah-i-Muhammadia may have launched a campaign against 'customary Sufism', it was also well-disposed towards 'doctrinal Sufism'. The Chishtī-Sābrīs, as upholders of a doctrinal form of Sufism, were able to draw close to this movement and to the Walīullāhī *ʻulamā*, to become involved in the reformist upsurge. Thus we find in this case that a long-established Sūfī order, in spite of its pluralist background, was able to mould its doctrines to reformist standards. Far from being contradictory to reform movements, it complemented them by becoming their advocate.

Although the Chishtī-Sābrīs played down the differences that separated them from the *ʻulamā*, they did not renounce their mystic discipline; rather, they maintained its core practices. There was a marked adherence to those practices and to the significance attached to them, albeit in varying degrees. While Barbara Metcalf remarked that *zikr* formed the core of meditational practices for Deobandīs,[12] I would add that this practice can be traced to their spiritual mentor, Imdādullāh. He revolutionized the concept of *zikr* by giving novel interpretations to it. *Zikr* was for him the essence of mystical practice, and the various forms of *zikr* that he **(p.252)** subscribed to in his devotional manual (*ism-i-zāt*, *bārahtasbīh*, *nafī-o-asbāt*, and *zikr-i-arrah*) were continued under Deobandī leaders such as Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, Maulānā Yaʻqūb Nānautawī, Hājī ʻĀbid Husain, and others. This demonstrates well the success of Imdādullāh in sustaining the devotional rites of his order throughout the challenging times of colonial rule, and his success in adapting them and reformulating their interpretation to meet reformist concerns.

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The Chishtī-Sābrī order emerged in this period as a reformist institution, oriented to a doctrinal form of Sufism. To what extent can the term ‘neo-Sufis’ be applicable to it? The expression is something of a cliché in the secondary literature, with little reflection on its aptness for what are rather diverse Sūfī-based movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. R. S. O’Fahey and Bernd Radtke, in their critique of the term, have summarized the main features that are supposed to characterize and distinguish ‘neo-Sufi’ movements.[13] Those principal features are: a) rejection of popular ecstatic Sūfī practices, for example, loud *zikr*, visiting saint’s tombs, *raq*s, and so forth; b) rejection of Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings, especially the doctrine of *wahdat-ul-wujūd*; c) rejection of the *murshid–murīd* relationship with an emphasis on moral and social teachings instead; d) predominance of following the ‘Muhammadan Way’; e) legitimation of the leader’s authority on the basis of its coming directly from the Prophet; f) renewed emphasis on Hadīs studies; g) rejection of *taqlīd* and the assertion to the right to exercise *ijtihād*; and h) the will to take political and military measures in defence of Islam.[14]

O’Fahey and Radtke further argue that all these elements were hardly true of any one Sūfī movement. They test this ‘neo-Sufi’ consensus against the activities and teachings of a group of Sūfīs whom consensus regards as indubitably ‘neo-Sufi’. These include the Moroccan mystic Ahmad bin Idrīs (d. 1837) and his principal students Muhammad bin ʻAli Sānusī (d. 1859), Muhammad ‘Usmān al-Mirghāni (d. 1852), and Ibrāhīm al-Rāshid (d. 1874).

The South Asian case appears to confirm O’Fahey and Radtke’s conclusions for North Africa. While Sūfī orders innovated some organizational forms, there were no innovative discontinuities with the Sūfī **(p.253)** past as the ‘neo-Sufi’ cliché implies. There was no rejection of the mystical philosophy of Ibn ʻArabī, of the initiatory path, or of the chains of spiritual authority. Some of the trends that came to be associated with ‘neo-Sufis’ in India can be seen in the leadership of Imdādullāh during the nineteenth century. As for the case with ‘neo-Sufis’, we noted the renewed emphasis on Hadīs studies by Chishtī-Sābrīs, as a result of their growing proximity with the *ʻulamā*. *Sanad*s in Hadīs received from the successors of Shāh Walīullāh were treasured and considered authoritative by Chishtī-Sābrīs. A significant number of the disciples of Imdādullāh were scholars of Hadīs known for their learning, teaching, and printing of Hadīs literature. Likewise, they accepted the superiority and finality of Sharīʻat over mystical experience and gave importance to both *ʻilm-i-zāhirī* and *ʻilm-i-bātinī*. The close connections between Sharīʻat, *tarīqat* and *haqīqat* that the ‘neo-Sufis’ repeatedly talked about is also found in the writings of Imdādullāh. Similarly, like the ‘neo-Sufis’, the authority of Imdādullāh was established directly from the Prophet through his visions in Mecca and Thanabhawan. One can also point to elements of social activism that led Imdādullāh to take on roles not normally associated with quietist Sūfīs. Although the exact role he played in the uprising of 1857 is not clear, he plainly supported it and many of his colleagues at Thanabhawan

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joined the military insurgency at Shamli against British forces. The records have been deliberately obscured by his followers who sought to protect him from the aftermath of the failed uprising.

All of that said, there were also significant elements of continuity in Chishtī-Sābrī traditions in the nineteenth century: unstinted respect and reverence for the *shaikh*, sympathetic attitude towards devotional practices such as '*urs* or *samā'*, strong belief in the doctrines of Ibn 'Arabī, continued adherence to devotional practices such as *zikr* or *murāqaba*, and so on. All of these tell us that Imdādullāh was following the core Chishtī practices. This study of the Chishtī-Sābrīs strengthens the claim that Sūfī reform did not entail a necessary rupture with past traditions, but a reformulation of the mystical heritage that deployed the terminology of Ibn 'Arabī, and reflected a renewed interest in the works of classical theorists of Sufism.

Thus, these movements of Sūfī reform can be differentiated, as suggested by Bruce Lawrence, not so much on the basis of doctrinal shifts but on the basis of a gradual accommodation, at once complex and local, **(p.254)** both with the religious scholars and with other Sūfī orders. Lawrence has counted new trans-regional mobility, new local institutions, multi-lingual forms of education, and also print networks among incentives or conditions for the emergence of 'neo-Sufism'.[15] This study confirms the crucial role of the written and printed word in the expansion of the Chishtī-Sābrī constituency and the training of *murīd*s. Imdādullāh's authority over north Indian '*ulamā* was maintained through his writings and correspondence—a sort of distance-teaching. Contacts with the Hijaz proved a powerful source of validation among the Indian '*ulamā* and the occasion of hajj provided a chance to reinforce these links. Through Imdādullāh, Chishtī forms of meditational practices spread in the Hijaz and his contacts with Indian '*ulamā* provided them a trans-national validation of their authority. From his letters it is clear that his works were in demand not only in India but also in the Hijaz. For this reason he welcomed the Arabic translation of his major work on devotional rituals of Sufism, *Ziā'-ul-qulūb*. His keen interest in the printing of his own works and other classical works, especially the *Masnavī* of Maulānā Rūmī, suggests his active involvement in the creation of print networks. His personal absence from the subcontinent challenged him to utilize these networks for enlarging his constituency, to remain aware of the needs of his dispersed *murīd* community, and to enlarge that community.

The eighteenth century, characterized as an era of Islamic revivalism, has also been seen as one of a plurality of campaigns of religious renewal; each led by leaders stressing one or the other aspect of the Walīullāhī thought. It was a period of community formation in which the 'public sphere' played an intrinsic part. Religious and cultural activities carried out in public spaces in the late nineteenth century became, in the words of Sandria Freitag 'an alternative world', where people made conscious choices about self-definition that enabled

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them to create a new-found sense of 'community'.[16] This community formation may have been an inherently conflictual process to the extent that movements were competitive rather than cooperative. For instance, as Usha Sanyal has pointed **(p.255)** out, the 'Others' against whom the Barelwīs defined themselves were primarily fellow Sunnī Muslims and *'ulamā* associated with Deoband, Ahl-i-Hadīs, or Nadwā.[17] These too disputed with and wrote against one another over the real meanings of 'Islamic reform', and were motivated by a sense that only one of them could be correct and only one of several alternatives would survive historically and provide the means to build a rejuvenated Muslim community. Both print and oral debates among the *'ulamā* of competing movements are thought to have been instrumental in creating a sense of community and enlarging the audience addressed. Akbar Zaidi has shown that these debates (*munāzarah*) were public forums that attracted the illiterate common people (*'awām*) and provided them with an arena to re-affirm their religious credentials and beliefs, and equally, to reinforce their sense of identity with a larger community. These were important, thriving markers of identity, alongside the pamphlets circulated among the literate.[18]

Scholarship needs to take closer account of the experiences and role of *munāzarah* and *fatāwa* wars. The view of Hājī Imdādullāh about such debates is a reminder that not all members of Muslim intelligentsia were favourably disposed toward these debates on identity. There were religious leaders who viewed them as detrimental to Muslims because they distracted their minds from more important concerns. As noted by K. A. Nizami: 'No doubt the leaders of different movements were men of learning, but by involving common Muslims in hair-splitting religious controversies—controversies which had no relevance to the pressing problems of society—evaded and delayed confrontations with realities.'[19] Far from seeing in these debates a means of building or strengthening identity formation, Imdādullāh saw in them a hindrance to Muslim solidarity and tendency towards sectarian factionalism. His view of Muslim 'community', clearly seen in his work *Faisla haft mas'la*, was much broader. It is noteworthy, that among the signatories to the controversial work *Anwār-i-sāti'ah* (a work of 'Abdul Samī 'bedil' in defence of certain Sūfī practices) are included the names of both Imdādullāh and Ahmad **(p.256)** Razā Khān Barelwī (the founder of the Barelwī School which opposed the Deobandīs and other reformists). Imdādullāh favoured a moderate reform of Sūfī practices and his major concern was to bring *'ulamā* and Sūfīs on to a common platform and minimize their differences. He disliked debating issues that had no significant relevance for the *'awām* and his advice was, if they had to be discussed, to air them in letters (i.e., privately), and not in public, in print, or in face-to-face debates.

Hājī Imdādullāh's opposition to *munāzarah* was, however, limited to debates among members of the same religious tradition. In one of his letters, he asked his disciples at Deoband to desist from debating with other fellow Muslims and

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turn their attention to the activities of the Arya Samaj. *Munāzarah* was considered an effective method to challenge the allegations of missionaries—both Christian and Hindu—but detrimental if held among leaders of the same confession. The reason was simple: these emphatic debates did not provide an occasion for serious intellectual exchange—the arguments on both sides were stereotypical and repetitious. Barbara Metcalf notes that there were pious men who despaired of these debates, lamenting both their indecorousness and their evident ineffectiveness. She cites a letter from a correspondent to the editor of *Arya Patrika* in 1885: 'but what I ask is, has any good resulted from these fiery discussions, has any Mahommedan been made to believe the doctrine, has any Christian been won over on its side, has any Brahmo been convinced of it? I have seen all parties sticking to the same arguments from day to day a thousand times *ad nauseam*. Not a single new argument has been advanced on any side.'[20] Moreover, since these debates had become public in the nineteenth century and were attended by the common people of the *qasbah*s, mostly illiterate, Imdādullāh was concerned that airing fine points of religious expression (of little substantive importance), issues beyond the understanding of unlettered people, risked adding to tensions and differences. He saw these debates among the *'ulamā* as (possibly egotistical) attempts to create independent identities and a mass following by inflating trivial (often contrived) differences to fire up ordinary Muslims.

Imdādullāh's legacy was significant and had far reaching consequences. His insistence on providing religious education, and his constant support for traditional educational institutions, identifies him as a **(p.257)** 'teaching *shaikh*'. He considered religious leaders and his own disciples not as mediators between man and God but as teachers of Islamic religious duties, and as exemplars of the Prophetic Sunnat. The Deobandī emphasis on the religious leader's responsibility for training and shaping the morals and outward behaviour of disciples, in accordance with their understanding of the Prophetic ideal, was to some extent an outcome of the training the Deobandi scholars had received under Imdādullāh. By continuing the spiritual-devotional practices of his order, and introducing the centrality of Sharī'at, Imdādullāh devised a novel way to meet the challenges of accelerating social change and the breakdown of the Mughal polity. The spiritual training of a disciple in the nineteenth-century Chishtī-Sābrī order thus involved simultaneous development of both spiritual and worldly qualities. As Scott Kugle rightly suggests, for Imdādullāh, 'self-mastery' meant that a fully realized Sūfī must not be reclusive or simply emotive, but should personally take on the needs and the political concerns of his community. This, as Kugle goes on to say, means engagement in building institutions for education and charity, being a mediator in social crises, upholding fairness in market practices and justice in wealth creation and distribution, while at the same time keeping one's heart and inner self oriented and devoted to God through constant *zikr*. Imdādullāh thus promoted a type of

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activist social ethics that his disciples at Deoband particularly upheld. He characterized a Sūfī master as one who, for and from the love of God, effortlessly enacts the duties, prescriptions, and recommendations of the Sharī'at.[21] This stress on Sharī'at and Sunnat while performing bodily or spiritual actions made most of the Chishtī-Sābrī rites acceptable to the *'ulamā* and provided a secure basis for the construction of his authority among the Muslims of South Asia. Thus we see the persistence of Sūfī traditions and devotional rituals in colonial India, though somewhat remodelled to promote a type of activist social ethics, of which the first generation of Deobandī *'ulamā* represent a good example.

Notes:

([1]) Warren Fusfeld, 'The Shaping of Sufi Leadership in Delhi: The Naqshbandiyya Mujaddidiya, 1750–1920' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1981).

([2]) Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, 1982), p. 348.

([3]) Of Shaikh 'Alī Sābir, the founder of the Sābrī branch, it is said that he resided in such isolation that he was able to nominate only one successor, who alone attended his funeral. Indeed, it is reported that no one dared to go near his grave until 'Abdul Quddūs Gangohī miraculously secured his permission to allow people to get spiritual benefits at his grave.

([4]) Seema Alavi, *Muslim Cosmopolitanism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Mass., 2015), p. 258; Scott Kugle, 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body: Anatomy of an Islamic Devotional Manual of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 1 (2003), p. 55; Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, pp. 161–2.

([5]) Claudia Liebeskind, *Piety on Its Knees: Three Sufi Traditions in South Asia in Modern Times* (Delhi, 1998).

([6]) Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and his Movement, 1870–1920* (Delhi, 1996).

([7]) For more details, see Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics*.

([8]) For details, see Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, ch. 4.

([9]) Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, p. 164.

([10]) S. 'Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī, *Sīrat-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, 2 vols. (Lucknow, 1977); Ghulām Rasūl Mihr, *Tehrīk-i-Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd*, 4 vols. (Mumbai,

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2008). Shāh Husain Gardezī, in his *Haqā'iq-i-tehrīk Bālākot* (Mubarakpur, 1988), has interpreted the movement differently.

([11]) Cited in Nizamī, *Hazrat Ahmad Saiyid Shahīd aur unkī tehrīk-i-islāh-o-jihād* (Bareilly, 1991), p. 40.

([12]) Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, pp. 185–90.

([13]) R. S. O'Fahey and B. Radtke, 'Neo-Sufism Reconsidered', *Der Islam* 70, no. 1 (1993), pp. 52–60.

([14]) O'Fahey and Radtke, 'Neo-Sufism Reconsidered', pp. 52–60.

([15]) Bruce Lawrence, 'Sufism and Neo-Sufism', in *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Muslims and Modernity*, (ed.) Robert W. Hefner, vol. 6 (New York, 2010), pp. 355–84.

([16]) Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley, 1989), p. 6.

([17]) Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politic*, p. 3.

([18]) Akbar Zaidi, 'Contested Identities and the Muslim Qaum in Northern India: c. 1860–1900' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2009), p. 197.

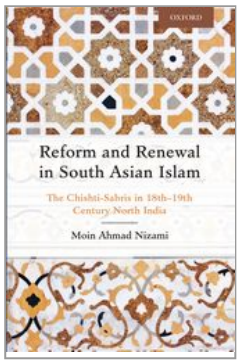
([19]) K. A. Nizami, 'Socio-Religious Movements in Indian Islam (1763–1898)', *Islamic Culture* 44, no. 3 (1970), p. 142.

([20]) Cited in Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband*, p. 216.

([21]) This view has been well elucidated by Scott Kugle in 'The Heart of Ritual is the Body', pp. 42–60.

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(p.258) Appendix

The Chishtī-Sābrī Shajra

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(p.259)

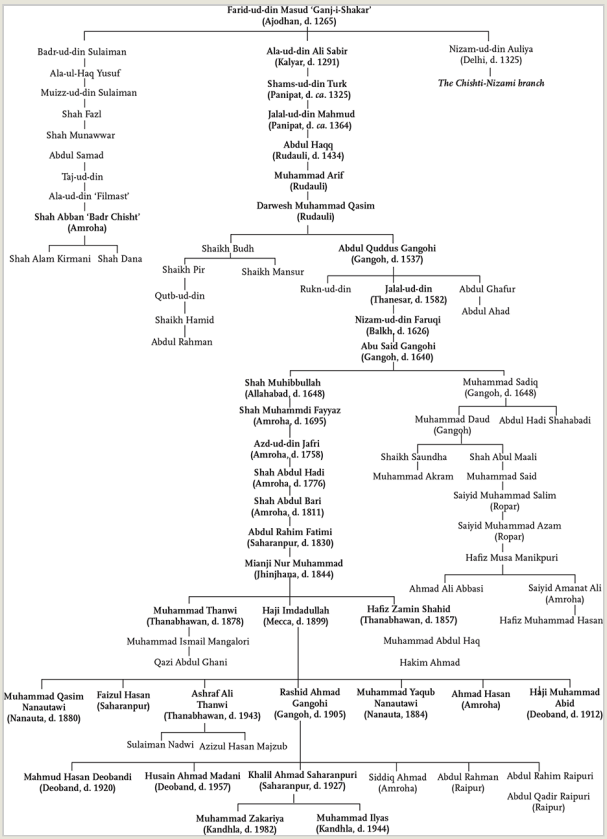


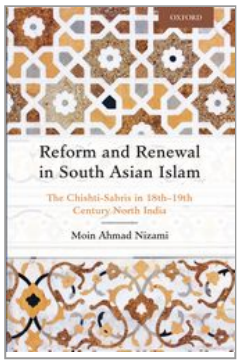
Chart A.1 Chishtī-Sabrī *Shajra*

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Source: Mahmud Ahmad Abbasi, *Tazkirat ul Kiram*; Khursheed Mustafa Rizvi, *Tazkirah-i-Badr Chisht*; and K. A. Nizami, *Tarikh-i-Mashaikh-i-Chisht*.

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(p.260) Glossary

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abdāl/ghaus/qutb
superior positions in an invisible hierarchy of special class of servants of God; *qutb* being the highest rank followed by *ghaus* and *abdāl*
ādāb (sing. *adab*)
etiquettes
ʻaql
intellect/reasoning
ashʻarī
a theological school founded in Baghdad by Abul Hasan Ashʻarī (d. 936) which challenged the *muʻtazila* position
baiʻat
an oath of allegiance, a Sūfī practice of initiation
bidʻat
an unlawful innovation in religion
chillā
a Sūfī practice of solitary confinement usually for forty days
fanā
mystical annihilation of the ego; the stage when a Sūfī dies to his self
farz
obligatory duties in Islam
fātiha
the opening chapter of the Qur'ān; the practice of reciting certain verses of Qur'ān, and distributing food in order to bless a departed soul
(p.261) *fatāwa* (sing. *fatwā*)
a jurisprudential ruling in Islam
fiqh

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Islamic jurisprudence; among Sunni Muslims there are four schools of jurisprudence: Mālikī, Hanafī, Shāfʻī and Hanbalī

futūh
unsolicited charity

hadīs
traditions of the Prophet Muhammad

hāl
emotional states experienced by a Sūfī

haqīqat
Ultimate Truth

harām
acts which are forbidden by Islamic Law

ijmāʻ
unanimous consent or consensus among Muslim scholars

ijtihād
the exercise of conscience and reason to derive legal rulings

ilhām
divine inspiration

ʻilm (pl. *ʻulūm*)
knowledge; *ʻilm-i-zāhirī* is exoteric knowledge and *ʻilm-i-bātinī* is esoteric knowledge

ʻilm-i-ghaib
knowledge of the unseen

ʻishq-i-ilāhī
cosmic emotion/divine love

ittihād
unity/concord/solidarity

jāgīr
assignment of land under the Mughals in lieu of service

jazb/sukr/wajd
ecstasy

jihād
strive/struggle, striving in God’s path

karāmāt
graces, miracles performed by pious men or Sūfis

kashf
intuition

khalīfah
in Sūfī terminology, a spiritual successor

khānqāh
Sūfī lodge/hospice, also known as *jamāʻat khānah*

khirqa
garments/cloak, in Sufism generally bestowed to a successor

kufr

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disbelief in any of the articles of faith

madad-i-maʻāsh

grants of revenue generally from land given to men of learning

madrasah

an Islamic religious school

majzūb

a Sūfī who renounces all worldly concerns

maktūbāt

letter collections

malfūzāt

table-talk/ discourses

manqulāt

traditional sciences

(p.262) *mansab*

rank or post in Mughal administration

mantiq

discipline of logic

maqāmāt

spiritual stages in Sufism

maʻqulāt

rational sciences

maʻrifat

gnosis/ knowledge of God. A person who achieves is called *ʻārif*

mīlād

celebration of birth anniversary, generally of the Prophet

muftī

a scholar who gives jurisprudential rulings in Islam

muhalla

locality or quarter of a city or town

mujāhidāt

spiritual exertions in Sufism

muʻjizāt

miracles performed by prophets

munājāt

a poem written in praise of God

munāzarah

debate usually on a religious topic

murāqaba

meditation/contemplation

murīd

a Sūfī disciple/aspirant

mustahab

acts which are permissible but not necessary (*wājib*) in Islamic Law

muʻtazila

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A theological school founded at Basra by Wāsil bin ʻAtā (d. 748) which insisted on rationalism and rejected miracles, inspirations and other mystic notions. They argued that knowledge of God is only possible through reasoning and not by inspiration.

nafs

the lower self

nahv

grammar

nasīhat

counsels/guidance

parganah

a territorial unit in Mughal administration for revenue and administrative purposes

pīr/murshid/shaikh

a Sūfī master

qasbah

a township, larger than a village but smaller than a city with substantial Muslim population

qāzī

a judge

sahv

sobriety

sajjāda-nashīn

hereditary successors at a Sūfī shrine

sālik

a Sūfī /one who is on the path of *sulūk*

(p.263) *samāʻ*

audition assemblies of Sūfīs, with or without music

sanad/ijāzat

grant of certificate by a master to his student authorising him to teach a particular book or subject.

sarkār

subdivision of *sūba* consisting of several *parganah*s

Sharīʻat

Islamic Law

Shajra

spiritual genealogy/ a chain of initiations of Sūfīs traced back to the Prophet

shirk

associating partners in the oneness of God

silsilah

Sūfī orders/brotherhoods, also known as *tarīqah*.

Sufism/Sūfī

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spiritual dimension of Islam emphasizing cosmic emotion and struggle against one's lower self (Arabic: *tasawwuf*). Spiritual leaders in Islam are known as Sūfīs.

sulūk
the Sūfī path, also known as *tarīqat*

suyūrghāl
revenue grants

tabarruk
blessing/sacred relic

tablīgh
dissemination of Islamic faith and knowledge

tafsīr
exegesis

taqlīd
sticking with past jurisprudential rulings of any of the four schools of jurisprudence among Sunni Muslims

tarīqat
see *sulūk*

tauba
repentance, an initial stage on Sūfī path

tauhīd
oneness of God/monotheism

tawajjuh-i-shaikh
devotional imagining of a Sūfī master by a disciple in order to receive spiritual blessings

tawakkul
reliance or trust in God

ta'wīl
allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān

ta'wīz
an amulet or charm to keep away evil

tazkirah
genre of biographical writings

'ulamā (sing. *'ālim*)
religious scholars trained in Islamic traditional sciences

'urs
celebration of death anniversaries of Sūfīs

wahdat-ul-wujūd
unity of Being: a Sūfī concept of *tauhīd* propounded by an Andalusian Sūfī, Ibn 'Arabī (d. **(p.264)** 1240), which suggests that there is only One Being and everything is His manifestation

wahdat-ush-shuhūd
unity of perception/a Sūfī concept popularized in South Asia by Indian Naqshbandī Sūfī, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) in opposition to

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the *wujudī*. It claims that identification of God with the world is a perception and not a proposition about reality.

wājib
acts which are necessary but not obligatory (*farz*) in Islamic Law

walī (pl. *auliyā'*)
friend/ Sūfī. Generally denotes closeness and intimacy with God

watan
homeland/ancestral region

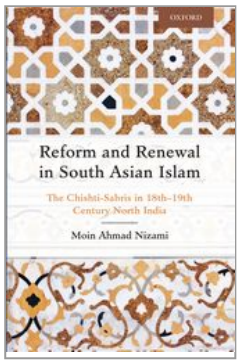
wazīfah
an incantation (in religious terminology), can also mean pension or stipend

wilāyat
the Islamic doctrine of sainthood

zikr
remembrance of God by repeating certain formulae or Qur'ānic verses

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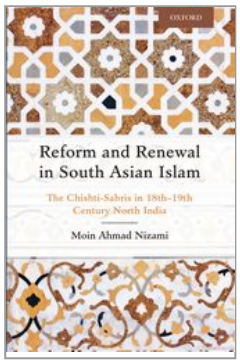
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Moin Ahmad Nizami

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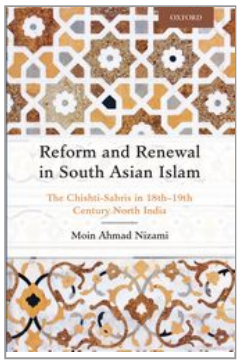
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